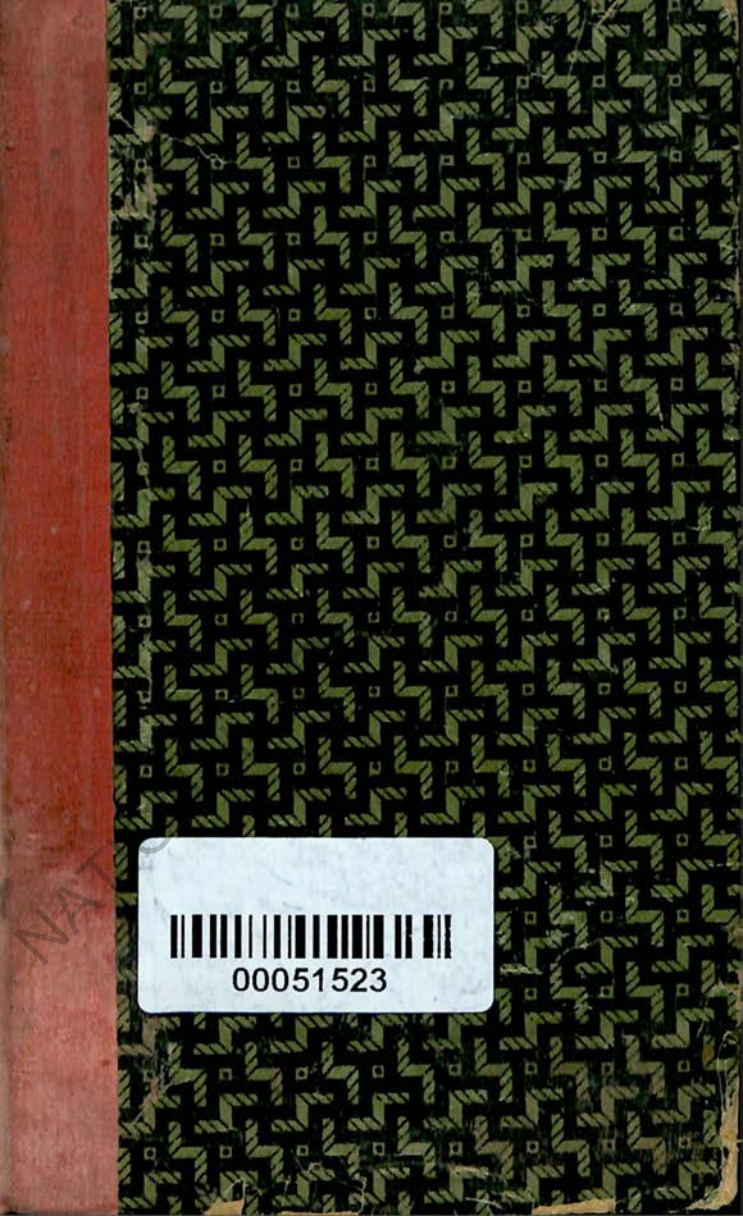
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Transformed Hinduism

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In Loving Memory

of

EDUARD BERG

Died 10*th November* 1907

Aged 33 *Years*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

Transformed Hinduism

The Monotheistic Religion of Beauty

51523

By the Author of

"*God the Beautiful*"

Vol. I

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E. P. B
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William Rider & Son, Limited
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INTRODUCTION

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have to thank you heartily for your kind appreciation of my little work, "God the Beautiful," written during a lingering illness, and published by a friend, and I am still more pleased to find that you fully agree with the views and hopes therein expressed.

As you are now leaving for India, there to spend the rest of your days, you desire me to explain to you how modern Hinduism may be transformed into a Monotheistic Religion of Beauty, without calling in the aid of other outside faiths. To meet your wish, I have written the various reflections and explanations which make up the present volumes, and trust that these will clear up satisfactorily this difficult subject to you and others.

There are already in the world too many

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religious systems with manifold sects, and to try to add to these would probably only be time and labour lost. The crying need is to interpret and develop what already exists. The reform of Hinduism from within is, therefore, the practical aim I have set before me in the present work. For myself I am content to remain unknown to all except yourself, but I trust that the work may find an entrance into the minds of the younger generation of educated, truth-seeking Hindus, and may also assist in removing the thick clouds of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry which have settled upon India for many thousands of years. The bright day in the religious life of India will arrive when at last the old creeds of Hinduism have been transformed into a new faith represented by the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty, which combines the philosophical, the æsthetical, and the spiritual aspects of Existence.

THE AUTHOR.

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Transformed Hinduism

Panorama of Ancient India

THE first actual glimpses we get of the primitive Aryan tribes date back some 3500 years, although some estimate their advent on the stage of history much earlier. Owing probably to climatic changes such as we know overtook Greenland within historic times, as well as to increase of population, the Aryans found that the high plateau upon which they had subsisted in their nomadic wanderings, since they had emigrated south from their northern homes which formed the cradle of their race, was no longer able to support the increase of their flocks and families. They were forced to seek new countries in order to procure fresh pastures and water-courses. A

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large tribe, closely related to the Aryans, which afterwards became known as the Iranians and played a prominent rôle in the history of the ancient world, sought a home in what goes now under the name of Persia. As for the Aryans themselves, a division was made. A large part of them, who were destined to gain even more distinction and honours than the Iranians, turned their faces in a north-westerly direction, and the bulk of them, after having planted important colonies all along the routes which they traversed, found themselves ultimately settled in the northern parts of Europe. The rest of the Aryans, and apparently the most numerous portion, decided to send an expedition to prospect new ground towards the mysterious South Country now known as India. The lot was drawn, and the flower of five large tribes or clans (Pauch Janah) risked their lives to accomplish this daring scheme. The names of the tribes which formed the advance guard are still preserved in their sacred books as worthy of everlasting honours.

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These were the Turvases, Auns, Drukayes, Tadus, and Purus tribes, evidently all picked men, heroic and daring souls, and not less so the women and the rest of the families and followers who shared their perils.

India is geographically divided by its physical features into three main portions:—

1. The towering, inaccessible mountain passes in the north;
2. The plains of the great rivers; and
3. The high tableland reaching towards the coast on both the eastern and western sides (the Deccan plateau).

In India various climates are found, from the eternal snow in the north to the intense enervating heat of the tropics in the south.

The Aryan tribes entered India through the north-west passes. But in face of enormous difficulties, hardships, and dangers, they found their way across the snowy passes of the Hindu Kush with their flocks and families. Thence they slowly descended to the Punjab, and afterwards to the valleys of the Ganges and Jaumna. They took up their

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abode in the fertile plains for a lengthened period, until strengthened by the advent of the rest of the Aryans, they ventured still farther forward. Gradually they secured the whole country north of the barriers formed by towering ridges of the Vindhya. Here they were securely established between the two mountain ranges of Himalaya and Vindhya, which thus became the early home of their race. This stretch of country came to be known as Āryāvarta, *i.e.* the "Abode of the Learned" (or "Noble").

As the Aryan invaders descended into India they found to their delight a splendid climate, a fertile soil, abundance of water-courses and other bountiful resources. In course of time, however, their onward progress was checked by the various hostile native armies which they met in their wanderings when tending their flocks. These armed oppositions to the peaceful progress of the Aryans came from earlier colonists belonging to quite different nationalities from which the Aryans were descended. Apparently they had invaded

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India several centuries earlier, and conquered the original settlers or aborigines, whom they retained with other lower tribes as slaves, to till the land and to serve as soldiers, of which the bulk of their fighting armies afterwards consisted. These earlier invaders went under the general designation of Dravids. Some of these tribes were given to sun worship; others to serpent, tree, or phalic worship; while among many of them human beings were offered at times as sacrifices to propitiate their vengeful deities. The Dravids, when the Aryans arrived in India, were no longer a pure race, but consisted of a mongrel breed of Turanians, Scythians, Mongolians, and still other earlier tribes, most of whom had entered India from the north-west through Thibet. These went generally under the name of the yellow races. To a great extent these latter had also intermarried with the aboriginal or dark races of India, most of which were of negroid type, almost black, of diminutive stature, cannibals, cruel and treacherous, revolting in appearance, and of

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degrading habits. The real rulers or aristocratic families, which had tried to keep the race pure, were mostly of Turanian breed. These by their prowess and skill had in the early ages of their arrival got the upper hand of the inferior races, and thus became the rulers over many kingdoms, both in the north and south of India. They had developed a considerable civilisation, and in some respects, as regards refinement and culture, they were far ahead of the shepherd Aryans, upon whom they looked with contempt. They ruled their realms as Oriental despots. The bulk of their populace consisted of the miserable Dasas (slaves), who were either prisoners of war from other tribes, or belonged to the aborigines. All these were ruled with rods of iron; and were forced to cultivate the land for the conquerors, or to fight for them in the army in times of troubles or quarrels with other rulers, or for quelling rebellions in their midst, all of which were of frequent occurrence.

Among the Dravids were found many large

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cities, the palaces, forts, and houses of which were built of stones, while in battle they used armour-plated chariots, which resisted spears and arrows, and hitherto had made them invincible. Yet in spite of all these advantages, the Aryan nomads succeeded in overthrowing the Dravids with all their forts and their overwhelming numerical strength. The chief reason was that during their long residence in the tropical, enervating climate, the Dravidians had become effete, and left most of the fighting to their slaves. These had no courage to resist the giant-statured, fair-skinned, flaxen-haired Aryans; the sons of the eternal snows, whose onslaught was resistless, because it was made by courageous men who came to do or die, men with brawny arms and stout hearts, who fought for their dear ones as well as for the honour and preservation of their noble race, and believed that they had as their unseen helper and comrade the mighty God of thunder, Indra. In His presence they took a pride in quitting themselves like heroes, so as to gain His smile

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and approval, and at last live for ever with Him in His home on high in the company of all their noble forefathers, whom they would meet when this life had been ended on the battlefield.

Glimpses of this worship of and trust in Indra come out in several of the early Vedic hymns:—

Subdue the might of the Dasa.
May we through Indra divide his gathered wealth.

Indra and Agni, by one effort together, ye
have scattered 90 forts belonging to the Dasyus.

Oh Indra, impetuous, Thou didst scatter by
Thy bolts 99 cities for Pura.

On Indra men must call amid the battle.
He, high adored, alone has power of succour.
The man who offers Him his prayers, libations,
Him Indra's arms helps forward in his goings.

They cry aloud to Him amid the contest.
Rushing to deadly combat, He protects them.

They gird themselves, O Mighty, for the conflict.
To them great Indra joins Himself in battle.

Praise the great renowned Indra,
Ruler of the world, with singing.

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Him let every creature honour,
Him in works and Him in action,
Indra it is who brings us freedom.
All the mortals, all the people
Ever in their hymns praise Indra,
Who to highest weal conducts us,
Lends success and fame in battle,
And our foes subdues in conflict,
The conqueror unconquered.

But we cannot linger longer over these stirring times, and must sum up the invasion of the Aryans by simply adding that by their wonderful successes they gained in time large tracts of land formerly ruled over by the Dravidian and other kings, both in northern and southern India. Their wars with their enemies continued more or less fiercely for centuries, and inspired their great epics: the Maha-Bharata, which relates the chronicles of the Delhi kings, contained in some 220,000 lines; while the second epic, the Ramayana, is the story of the Aryan advance into southern India. Both are justly celebrated, and it is surprising to think that these celebrated epics have been composed several centuries before the Christian era.

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We have seen that by their masterful tactics and stratagems, as well as by their courage, strength, and religious enthusiasm, the Aryans gradually overcame the resistance of the earlier invaders, although the latter were better equipped and in possession of forts and castles, besides being much more numerous, but failed in courage and patriotism. In consequence most of the northern parts of India fell to their share, after which they passed the Vindhya Hills towards southern India. From simple nomads living in tents, the Aryan chieftains found themselves installed by dynastic changes as despotic rulers over large kingdoms, many of which are still claimed as under the rule of their descendants. In their wanderings over the steppes, their commonwealth had naturally been democratic in its simplest form, based upon the family life, every man having an equal voice in the assemblies of the tribes, and becoming a living power for good in all that pertained to its welfare.

In the new sphere, however, now thrust

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upon them, the Aryans found quite a different state of things, namely, a central authority which ignored all the lower stratas of society in the voice of the management of the state, a government which had gradually degenerated into a despotism of the most absolute type, where the kings claimed divine descent, and the people were slaves, belonging like cattle to the soil, and ruled with rods of iron and brutality. The Aryans were unable to change this form of government which had been in existence for centuries before their arrival, the more so as they found that the strange nations they had come to rule over had none of the freeman's spirit or nobility, but were unreliable, false, treacherous, and rebellious, sunk in the densest ignorance and superstition, with a revolting worship.

With such material to deal with as subjects, no wonder that the Aryans found that the only possible mode of maintaining themselves in their regal and military authority as executors of law and order, was to leave things very much as they found them.

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While this is true, they no doubt also ruled with a fairness and clemency to which the people had been little accustomed under their former taskmasters. In other ways they tried to improve the social, moral, and spiritual condition of these benighted people. The caste system, however, which they found in India in a more pronounced form than had ever existed among the Aryans, proved a barrier to attain this object, and indeed it has done so to our day.

Apart from this, the Aryan kings had a mighty help in the assistance of their wise men, which in their primitive society comprised their poets, singers, reciters, priests, and aged counsellors. To especially the priests and poets fell the lot of instructing the people and introducing among them a higher and purer worship, so as gradually to wean them from their abominable gods and cruel rites; in short, to lift them up to a higher state of civilisation, and thereby also to make their lot in life better and happier. This literary or priestly class of Aryans, by their

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splendid intellects, devoted lives, strenuous self-culture, and soaring ambition, established their spiritual reign over India, by means of which they formulated their Brahmanical religious system, which was originally based in its purity upon life's "daily conduct" and not upon airy theories or abstract dogmas. Thereby their influence has been felt in profoundest manners for nearly three millenniums; and if it had not been for their genius the military reign of a section of India by the Aryan nomads would by itself have deserved little to justify the everlasting renown and admiration of other ages for the Aryans in India. As we proceed, this will be seen more clearly. From a merely military or political point of view the descent upon India by the primitive Aryans is seen now as only one more invasion of emigrants from the north, followed in its turn by still others, one of which at least was almost as important and far-reaching in its importance as had been the advent of the Aryans.

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The history of India has been compared to a drama in three great Acts:—

1st Act.—The Invasion of the *Aryans*, in which is seen the struggle of *rival races* for predominance.

2nd Act.—The Invasion of the *Mohammedans*, in which is seen the struggle of *rival faiths* for supremacy.

3rd Act.—The Invasion of *Europeans*, in which is seen the struggle of *rival trading nations* for the economical exploration of India.

Or, in other words, the

1st Act is the period of Ancient India.

2nd Act is the period of Mediæval India.

3rd Act is the period of Modern India.

We have made a rapid survey of the 1st Act, and shall be even shorter in considering the 2nd Act. For more than a millennium India was ruled by Aryans, as well as by Dravidians: the former predominated in the north, the latter in the south. Between these races war became chronic. India, north and

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south, became a country devastated by intestine wars, famine and pestilence, and all progress in material and national life was retarded for centuries. But a breaking up of the fallow ground was now at hand. In the eleventh century a new power appeared, namely, the Mohammedans, who inflicted the first severe blow upon the independence of Hindostan since the Aryans had appeared. A great part of India by force and fraud was conquered by Islam, and whenever they became the rulers, the fierce intolerant faith they professed had to be submitted to by the Hindus, or heavy tributes exacted and death sentences inflicted. It is a long history, full of cruelty and barbarity.

We now come to the 3rd Act. So far it had seemed as if the Hindus were never to know any but despotic governments, and that owing to the great racial, linguistic, and religious differences in India it were an impossible task to weld all these 250 million souls into one nation. During three thousand years all who tried it—whether Dravidians, Aryans,

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Greeks, Persians, Mongolians, Mohammedans —all had completely failed in this herculean task. Nor, later, were the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French any more successful. At last, one power, a near kinsman of the ancient Aryans, appeared on the scene and has triumphantly succeeded within the last two centuries in bringing all these warring elements into a higher synthesis and erecting one Empire upon the ruin of all the rest.

The race which achieved this wonderful feat deserves a longer review than was given to the previous two acts, as few conquests in the world can compare with it for magnitude and for the happy results it has brought to the conquered nations.

In the earlier part of this chapter it was mentioned that a portion of the ancient Aryans had to leave their grazing grounds on the high plateau of Asia, and to seek for fresh pastures in the practically unknown countries lying north and north-west. As usual at every fresh departure, it was those in the prime of life, the bravest, the fittest,

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the healthiest and strongest of both sexes, who sallied gladly forth at the call of duty, for such youths always glory in the prospects of new fields for their activities, and see vistas of glorious adventures which beckon them onwards. The weaklings, the timid, the old, remained behind. And indeed to the latter the prospects of those who had now to face the advance to the north was not cheerful. They knew that they would have to battle with an inhospitable country, and a long rigorous winter; to encounter on their marches, swamps, morasses, deep rivers, poor soil, and impenetrable forests inhabited by fierce beasts and savage warriors. Yet nothing daunted their intrepid spirits, or prevented them from entering on that struggle for centuries with nature and brave enemies, which called forth their vigour, determination, endurance, and resources.

They became, in fact, the truest and the best representatives of their noble and daring progenitors, and have remained so to this day in their love of liberty, with indomitable

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energy, skill, and enterprise, renowned for their public spirit and their private virtues.

Forward they forced their way, fought, toiled, and suffered for many generations. They must have faced innumerable dangers, privations, and hardships in their search for suitable land where they could permanently settle. Across the highlands of Central Asia they moved with the slow pace of flocks and herds, or with temporary halts, or long settlements here and there, as the case might be, according to the pastures they met or the compulsion of an enemy in their rear. These forward expeditions generally started early in spring and continued until late in the season. They rested all the winter. Their route seems to have been at first in a north-westerly direction, towards the shores of the Black Sea, where they would learn to build boats and navigate them, and to construct rafts for crossing large rivers in their marches.

Unable to overcome the armed settlers of Slavs who outnumbered them greatly, they cautiously and slowly advanced through south-

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western Russia, planting colonies in the south of Europe, embracing Greece as they went along, and at last reached the shores of the Baltic, and invaded Scandinavia, driving the Laps before them. Here they were forced to make their homes for centuries, checked by the Baltic and the North Sea. With the exception of keeping up communications by open boats with the various islands which now go under the name of Denmark, they were unable for a long time to cross the stormy North Sea, and seem to have been in ignorance of what lay beyond it. As has been well said, the ocean seemed the only term of their wanderings and of their conquests. But by-and-by, by their restless energy and skill they managed to construct large open boats, and ventured, without compass or maps, to push out into the open sea. At last they landed on the British coast. Encouraged by their success, they lost no time on their return to increase their fleets. In later centuries they were found swarming everywhere with their numerous fleets manned

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by warriors. They came early to realise what other nations were slow to learn, that the sea, instead of a barrier, was to them the very element and condition of their success. They loved the wild sea, which carried them and their frail crafts on its bosom with an ease and expedition which even in an open and plain country was impracticable.

Yet, although the sea was their element and delight, they were equally prepared to avail themselves of the dry land, and equally at home upon it. Cradled in the surge, the storm and wintry blast, they were early trained to work and hardship. Thus they were spared the temptations and enervation of indolence and luxury. Stern nature nurtured them to be warriors gifted with a heroic cast of body and soul, befitting the lofty stations they were to occupy in times to come. The chief of these sea kings who made war their profession were generally the younger sons of the rulers of the various petty kingdoms of Scandinavia, whose inheritance would be small. They were therefore sent out after proper

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training to seek fortune and glory upon the ocean with the outfit of a vessel and its equipments. War was an honourable profession in those rude times, and war became the passion of the sea kings, in which they gloried and excelled. To them it was a disgrace to die on a bed of sickness, for only the brave warriors who died on the battlefield would be received with marks of honour and applause in the Valhalla above. Hence, a craving for brave deeds along with wealth and fame were among the chief aims of these daring Viking Aryans. Nor, as has been pointed out, was retaliation possible by the foreign countries they descended upon; for these stern warriors, unlike other invaders, had not a yard of country, not a fort to be laid siege to, no property besides their vessels, no subject but their crew.

In course of a few centuries they had extended their conquests to the Hebrides, the Shetland and the Orkney Islands, while gradually extending in the north so far as Iceland and Greenland. They had laid tribute in the

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south so far as Greece, and in the east they fought in Palestine and Africa. They founded kingdoms in Italy and Illyria, and played a notable part in the last struggle of the Roman world for ascendency over Europe. They helped to depose and create princes, and won great fame in the wars against the Arabs, Saracens, and other infidels. Everywhere they appeared, and when least expected. They sailed up the various important rivers in Germany, Holland, and France, and extorted tributes or planted colonies which afterwards became famous. Their Viking ships were found so far afield even as Spain, Italy, and Constantinople. In Scotland, one of their favourite haunts, the nobility of the lowlands has originated mostly from the Danes. Even more, they prospected also to the setting sun, and under Leif, the son of Erik, they crossed the Atlantic with only thirty-five men. This was in A.D. 1003, when they reached Massachusetts in America and planted a colony. Other expeditions followed as late as A.D. 1347. This discovery of America was about five

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hundred years before the advent of Columbus. Thus they became the dominant sea power in the world for nearly twelve centuries, because they realised that the sea was not to them a dividing element, but a unifying force.

By a continuous flow of emigration from Scandinavia, which lasted several centuries, Great Britain became their most powerful colony even so early as the seventh century, and they gradually supplanted more or less the native element, or invigorated the ancient Britons by intermarriage. At last the Danes subdued the whole of England, and in the eleventh century ruled it under several kings. William of Normandy, who afterwards obtained the English throne, was a descendant of the Viking Rollo, to whom the French had ceded Normandy, so that the northern Aryans represented by the Danes or Northmen, twice laid the foundation of the present greatness and extent of Great Britain.

The effect of the settlement of the Vikings in this country was to raise up a strong brave race with a powerful physical as well as a strong

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moral backbone, with a keen love of liberty, democratic in their habits, lovers of truth and uprightness. They were energetic, daring, self-reliant and self-respecting, with strong common sense; they sought facts everywhere, with no mystical tendency whatever; practical, level-headed, and of sound judgment.

In Great Britain they lived for nearly five centuries, multiplied greatly and prospered. Yet the old Viking spirit, their love of the ocean and love of adventures and enterprises, were still at work in their descendants. Thus it came to pass that Great Britain slowly began to develop as a sea power. In course of time the English dared even to defy the Spanish, Dutch, and French naval forces in the zenith of their powers and far more numerous and strong. Yet Britain came out of these prolonged and fierce fights, although everything seemed against her, as the one conquering power. Ever since she has ruled the ocean undisputed, the greatest sea power now the world has ever seen, worthy successors of her daring Viking ancestors.

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It is therefore to these brave Aryan warriors and to their sea-loving instincts we owe the transformation which took place in Great Britain, and the splendid physical, moral, and spiritual inheritance which they bequeathed to their descendants. Millions upon millions of these Aryan descendants have been scattered during the last 250 years over the new world to countries formerly entirely unknown, yet everywhere they have prospered, for they have not only proved themselves worthy foemen in the days of battle, but also splendid colonists to subdue the earth and bring the wilderness to blossom like the rose. They have understood the difficult art of self-government and of ruling alien races far better than other colonising nations. Witness the North American States, Canada, and the large colonial possessions, &c., in the inhabitants of whom one recognises to this day many of the traits of character which their ancestors possessed, and by which they have been made free, prosperous, and the pioneers of modern civilisation every-

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where. In their case, as in the case of the Vikings, their hardships were the native soil of their splendid manhood, with self-control and self-reliance bringing successes.

Meanwhile, stimulated by the successes of the Portuguese and the Dutch in their trading in the far East, and which they jealously tried to preserve for themselves as a monopoly, and thereby had amassed enormous wealth and influence, the British Aryans in 1601 sent out a trading expedition to India in order likewise to try and get a footing for trading purposes. It is unnecessary to narrate the difficulties, resistance, and treachery they met on all hands from Europeans as well as Hindus, and how these were overcome, nor to detail the brilliant episode lasting some 150 years, during which they were called upon to help Indian princes in repulsing the attacks of other native states, and how the handful of Britishers ended, by daring and powers of arms, combined with diplomacy and tact, to overthrow one after another, or secure their submission by treaties, until for the first time

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in history they subjugated every part of India from south to the farthest north.

Great Britain has welded all these warring, factious, and separate nations of whatever colour, language, or creed, into one immense Empire under the sway of an Aryan British ruler. Thus, what the early Aryans who entered India from the north some 3500 years before failed to accomplish, their kinsmen of a later age, more representative of the original progenitors on the highlands of Asia in their powers, their character, energy, principles, enterprises, and intellect, have succeeded in doing by entering India from the south. The numerous scattered nations of India have at last found their kinsmen in the new rulers to whom they can look up with confidence, and even with admiration. Through them their arrested energies will be set free, and their immemorial slavery of body, mind, and soul will be liberated, so as to bring these 300 million of dusky natives to come to the front rank of the civilised world, by having modern education offered to them from the

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highest to the lowest, even although it may take centuries to accomplish this herculean task.

Few realise what the conquest of India means, nor the extent and population which has fallen to the guidance and rule of Great Britain. India is more than twenty times as large as England and Wales, having a territory of fully 1½ million square miles stretching from east to west at a distance of 1900 miles, and a population of nearly 300 million who speak some 200 languages and dialects, with a bewildering number of sects. It contains one-fifth of the world's inhabitants, and except China, no other country remotely approaches to India, either in extent of territory or in denseness of population.

In the ancient Aryans' homes, the military class was no doubt honoured as the nobility of the land, for the protection of the tribes and all their belongings devolved upon them; but otherwise the rule of the Aryans, their whole system, was based upon freedom, and therefore upon democratic principles, it being

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early recognised that for the welfare of the community the harmonious co-operation of *all* classes was not only desirable, but indispensable, and this principle followed the Aryans in their march into Europe, and by their descendants, the Vikings, was transmitted and embodied in the English laws and government to our day. Thus Great Britain has all along been the foe of all despotism in Church or State.

The attitude of a despotic class government, so prevalent in the East, has in every age been the cause of stagnation and of retrogression in civilisation by those nations who have introduced it. Unfortunately, the Indian rulers generally forgot the wise principle of rule by which their ancestors had been animated. The stagnation of the country and the grinding poverty of the millions of their subjects for centuries were the result.

At last, however, the day of liberty came to the Hindus by the advent of the British Aryans in India. They have preserved and established in India their ancestors' wise

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principle of statesmanship, for although it is an imperial power yet civil freedom is its foundation.

While the eastern potentates, whether Aryans, Greeks, Persian, Mongolians, or Mohammedans, ruled India in succession for centuries chiefly for their own pleasure, self-interest, or self-aggrandisement, mostly regardless of those under them who tilled the soil (for about 90 per cent. of the Hindus are devoted to agriculture), the British Aryans realised as an axiom in politics that no government has a right to exist which does not exist in the interests of the governed; hence the primary duty of every government nowadays among the foremost nations is the protection of its subjects, their comfort and happiness, and the development of the resources of the country for the good of all. With this object, Britain is ruling India with a single eye to the good of the nation, offering modern education without regard to position in life, or rank in caste, to everybody who applies. This will lead the Hindus out of

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antiquity and mediævalism, with their trammels and false conceptions, into the present time, with its wonderful discoveries. The British want the Hindus to become a nation worthy of their ancestors and worthy of the great rôle which in ancient times they have acted in the history of the human race.

The welfare and contentment of the people is being secured by a wise adjustment of the sources of taxation, by developing industrial resources, by erecting hospitals and dispensaries, by starting missionary work, by promoting sanitary arrangements, and in a hundred other ways. Loyalty in India as everywhere else is to be won by even-handed justice and clemency, and by that only. The true wealth of nations is nowadays seen to be, not by the splendour of the few individuals, but by the prosperity of the whole people. Stability, permanence, justice, safety, and peace are guaranteed to the Hindus under the British rule.

The executive and legislative branches of India are in the hands of the British. They

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do not hold it from the people, but for the people, until the whole nation has been lifted up from the mire of ignorance and superstition, and has been educated to know and to use the right of self-government. So shall come the true realisation of the vision of her seers and the real fulfilment of the longings of her prophets.

As India has a teeming population, some 295 millions, and as they have multiplied at an extraordinary rate since they came under British peaceful and beneficent rule, the number in a dozen years or more will easily reach 300 millions, a myriad of people almost impossible for any one fully to grasp in thought. Yet, here is the astonishing fact: all these myriads of native subjects, sensitive, fanatical, ignorant, and superstitious; many of them treacherous, turbulent, and rebelliously inclined, are controlled by a mere handful of British soldiers and civilians. To account for this wonderful state of things it must be borne in mind that in India the British rule has become identified with equal

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justice, with administrative rectitude; with impartial and watchful care for and interest in every class of the governed from the highest to the lowest; and with respect for the religious beliefs of others. Besides, it is realised by the Hindus, that beyond the seven seas, there is a vast and wealthy power which can draw upon unnumbered forces from all her dominions in the world, and with all the modern arms of destruction quell any rebellion. In this way, and by promoting the country's material, industrial, and agricultural resources, by seeing to the welfare and prosperity of the people, even the lowest classes, Great Britain, the adopted home of Northern Aryans, has created a more peaceful, a more contented, and a more united India than ever existed before. In short, Great Britain has given India increased wealth, peace, security, and work, thus bringing about a formerly unheard-of national prosperity, along with an increased watchful protection against the calamities of famine and plagues.

India is now realising at last a sense of

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unity and consolidation. It has got civil and religious liberty, and her prospects are bright. Therefore, it has been well said: "Its people are more free, more secure, and more prosperous under British rule than they were under their native dynasties. British rule in India means order in place of anarchy, protection by the law instead of oppression by the sword, and a vast, free people, dwelling in safety, where of old each man was beaten down beneath whosoever was stronger than himself."

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The Development of India's Commerce

Not only the military classes of Aryans made their fortunes by the partial conquest of India from the north. The trading classes also gained great wealth. The merchants were apparently as keen, active, and intelligent in their own departments as were the military classes in theirs. Hence, after the country became more settled and communications could be opened with the outside world, they sought an outlet for the new products which they found in abundance in this newly acquired and wonderful land. Armed caravans now began to be employed, and the treasures they brought to foreign marts made ancient India famous everywhere. India's exports in ancient times comprised all sorts of spices, drugs, dyes, perfumes, silks, jewellery, precious stones, and rare and valuable animals

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and birds, such as elephants, apes, peacocks, birds of Paradise, &c. Gradually trade depots were established in Asia and later in Arabia, Africa, and Europe, in order to distribute these valuable exports. Every depot proved a mine of wealth to its respective country, and these cities thus became famous and exercised an enormous influence in ancient history. Among these cities which grew and flourished as long as they held the key to the Indian trade, and which fell into decadence when it was transferred to other parts of the world, we may recall Bagdad, Palmyra, Syria, Tyre, Alexandria, and Mediterranean ports, such as Venice and Genoa and Constantinople. After the Portuguese had doubled the Cape in 1497, the overland trade of India got a severe check, and India's exports now began to be diverted by sea, by which Venice and other inland transit depots had their fates sealed. The Emporium became settled in Lisbon, then later on it shifted to Amsterdam, and for about the last 150 years it has remained with Great Britain.

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With characteristic energy and thoroughness the British Aryans, after the peace of Plassey in 1757 (which practically decided the supremacy of Britain over all other claimants), lost no time in trying to develop the country in all directions, so as to increase her trade and wealth, although it was only after the Crown had taken over the country from the East India Company in 1858 that the regeneration of the country was taken up in full earnest. Since then, however, marvellous transformations have taken place, all in the direction of making India a more prosperous, more educated, more contented and united nation, than ever it has been before. The exports since that time have risen by leaps and bounds. To attain this expansion of the country's resources, Britain has not hesitated to invest money freely in India, which now amounts to several hundreds of million pounds sterling.

In every way Britain can give a good account of her stewardship in the rule of India, as well as in developing her trade.

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Her efforts to encourage and expand the industries, the trade and the agricultural interests of the country, fall under the following main heads:—

1. She has given peace to India, which is of prime importance: peace from external enemies and peace also from predatory tribes or bands of robbers, which used to infest the land, as did pirates by sea, and by the stopping of all internecine wars, formerly a chronic state of matters and considered incurable.

2. She has built a network of railways which communicate with the leading cities of the Empire, and these bring India into closer fellowship and aid mightily in the expansion of her commerce. More lines are being built as the country is opened up.

3. Irrigation works, of incalculable benefit to India, by fertilising its deserts and draining its swamps, have been completed, and others are in course of construction. Country roads have been improved and new highways constructed, waste land reclaimed, canals built, water-courses widened and deepened, gas and

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electricity introduced into towns and cities, and sanitation grappled with, which has reduced the death-rate considerably.

4. Britain is also fighting with success the often recurring famines by a vast organisation of public works, state relief and private charity, while the scourge of plagues are checked by the erection of hospitals and by having duly qualified doctors in every district to stamp out if possible the first appearance of the enemy. Even the wild beasts which formerly overran the country districts and did immense havoc among the natives are being gradually exterminated or kept in check.

5. New industries have been started, such as coal-mining, as well as mines for various minerals, mica and precious stones, gold, &c., besides steam factories, cotton and jute mills, indigo factories, tea gardens, &c. &c.

6. Under Britain's fostering care large cities have been developed, and are now the centre of new industrial life on modern principles. Docks have been built, rivers are navigated

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by steam and electricity, while Calcutta, Bombay, &c., are visited by steamers of the largest sizes and do an enormous export trade, with a growing import trade as well. All over the country more land is yearly being brought under cultivation, so as not only to feed India's increasing millions of subjects, but also to enable her yearly to increase her power of exporting her surplus.

Now all this expansion of the country, this increase of agriculture, of mining, of shipping, of industrial undertakings, of education (scientific and technical) spreading light and learning, tend to dissolve old customs which have had their day, but must now give way to better methods introduced by Britain, so as to raise the masses, and give them, with the rest, health, wealth, and prosperity, and the manifold blessings of modern civilisation.

It is clear how immeasurably more successful the British Aryans have been than their ancient kinsmen, who in their prosperity often forgot to act upon the principles of enterprise and activity which had been their heritage.

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Their rulers often became luxurious, indolent, and enervated; lived upon the past, and shunned exertions for the betterment of the country and those under them. If sufficient revenue could be raised to enable them to live in extravagance and debauchery, it was not uncommon to allow the people to shift for themselves or starve. In those days the government was for the few; now the government is not only for the few, but also for the many.

The Hindus have thus good reason to be proud of their Aryan Viking kinsmen, who have shown not only a genius for fighting, but also a genius for ruling with wisdom, rectitude, and clemency. After having been separated for ages, they have now met, and are destined, if they are both to prosper, to live in closest fellowship. The British Aryans are kinsmen, who, in spite of having had everything against them in ages past, without caste system to keep the breed pure and intact, have yet forced their way by their innate energy, and by judicious breeding with

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other tribes, to become the foremost nation in the world.

As has been well said, the Empire built up by the British Aryans is vaster in scale, mightier in strength, and richer in resources than any other Empire ever seen in the world. Our Empire, whose flags fly over nearly one quarter of the human race, and about one-fifth of the habitable globe, is absolutely without parallel. Its area is roughly 11 million square miles. This Empire of Great Britain stretches under all skies, includes the richest lands on the planet and the strongest fortified places in all seas, while the English language is now spoken by some 1200 million people, being far ahead of any other language spoken on the earth.

It has been remarked that under British rule, India has received what she never had before :—

Freedom of Person.
Freedom of Speech.
Freedom of Conscience.
Freedom of the Press.
Freedom of Commerce.

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Furthermore, all have the same claims for protection and justice; all may receive into their lap the fruits of western civilisation, progress, and culture, with schools, universities, and other educational institutions, with missions, hospitals, and sanitary projects. The Hindus are beginning to have infused into them the vigour, virility, moral backbone, and robustness of mind of the British Aryans. From them they are now learning the principles of constitutional liberty and stable government. Everywhere measures are taken for the intellectual, moral, and political regeneration of India. The pulsation of a new public life with an inspiring sense of public duty is being felt throughout India, which in due time will transform ancient narrow, national, or clannish ideals and aspirations.

Nor will the characteristics of the British Aryans—these victorious heroes of a thousand battles by sea and land, yet not less renowned by achievements in the arts of peace, science, and industry, and the foremost successful colonisers—be less to the front now

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when new ideals are opening up before humanity. In the higher civilisation upon which we are entering it will be realised that the ultimate acme of humanity is universal brotherhood dominated by love, sympathy, and goodwill, because God is Love in perfect beauty and loveliest attractions. Yet, even on that advanced stage, the fighting instincts of the Aryan forefathers will still be at work, but directed into a higher service. There will still be room for fighting, but it will be a call to society to do more earnest battle, not alone each one against his own lower nature, but also more effectually against those compact bodies of individuals who have but one dominating guide, callous selfishness, whose God is gold, and to whom this life is everything. In the future as in the past, it will be a constant fight for the realisation of higher ideals, for the brighter mirroring of the Divine in the human soul, because true sympathising love is the sum total of the moral code, the grand focus where all the infinite lines of law converge. Not only in

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the ideal, but in the real, love will be seen to be the only law, for in its ultimate aspect love sees only love outside of itself, by transforming all unloveliness into its own likeness. In this spiritual warfare carried into every department of life, there will arise a new sense of the worth, the beauty, and the sacredness of human life, and a still brighter eternal dawn will be joyfully looked forward to, where every burden shall drop away, every noble desire reach fulfilment, and every struggling germ of good within us expand to immortal fragrance and beauty.

But not alone within the soul and in the social life will there be room for constant fighting. In confronting nature with its tremendous forces there is the arduous task devolved upon humanity of utilising these to its own service. We have but to think of the wonderful control over these which little by little has passed into the hands of civilised humanity, with the amount of comfort and help already brought us; and we are only as it were at the starting-point. Not only so,

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a still fiercer warfare has been entered upon in modern times, and that is against the attacks of the lower planes of minutest life forces in the human body found to be destructive of health and even of life. The marvellous success already achieved in this warfare has been phenomenal.

To these and similar noble tasks let the subtle thinkers of India (leaving dreamy speculations of no practical value) join hands with their kinsmen from across the seven seas. So shall the world gradually realise a higher standard of culture, comfort, health, length of days and happiness; then shall their sages reach the absolute, the perfect, the final religion, which is founded upon worshipping and loving with all the soul's passion the Divine in His perfect beauty of moral and spiritual graces—a religion which can be appreciated and appropriated in every land and in every age.

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The Rise of Brahmanism

MEANWHILE how had the Aryans who belonged to the "learned or priestly caste" succeeded in carrying out their ambitious project of erecting a *spiritual world Empire* over India? To this day India is a witness to the profound spiritual and civil influences they have exerted for nearly two millenniums. However much many may be inclined to criticise their methods, no unprejúdiced persons can withhold their admiration of the Brahmans' enthusiasm, their genius, and their devotion to what they considered the people's highest good and God's express will: the establishment of a kingdom upon earth where God should be the sole King, and they themselves His chosen representatives to carry out His behests, just as we find centuries later in Israel, and earlier again in ancient Egypt.

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In Vedic times, when there were no fixed castes such as they became later, the priestly duties among the humbler classes devolved upon each head of the household. Every householder was looked upon as the priest of the family, whose duty it was to recite the sacred hymns before the listening deities, light the sacrificial fire, and present offerings and libations to them. In the public assemblies the chieftain, or the aged father of the tribe, performed these sacred duties, until in later ages, when the ceremonials became more complicated and deities were thought more difficult to please, a school of poet priests were set aside to be specially trained to the sacred office, it being thought that the fates of the tribes might often hang upon the proper performance of the religious duties. In the evolution of the priestly office we see, therefore, threefold stages:—

1. The "Kshatrujas" (*the nobles*) and the "Visas" (*the people*) both officiated as priests.

2. (*a*) The military nobles ("Kshatrujas").

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(*b*) The spiritual nobles ("Brahmans").
(*c*) The citizens ("Vaisyas").

3. (*a*) The spiritual nobles ("Brahmans"), as the incarnation and representatives of the deities.
(*b*) The military nobles ("Kshatrujas").
(*c*) The citizens ("Vaisyas"); merchants, farmers, and tradesmen.
(*d*) The slaves ("Soodras").

Outside these sacred castes there were the lowest aborigines or pariahs, looked upon as outcasts of society, deprived of all civil privileges, and held in abhorrence.

Out of the whole population of India since it became a nation, no class has risen to such an eminence or exercised such a profound influence for weal or woe upon India as have the Brahmans. From the very beginning of the Aryans' entrance upon the soil of India they represented the "brain" of the nation, being its most gifted members of the community. They represented not only the intellectual gifts of the Aryan nation, but also its moral consciousness and spiritual

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aspirations. The Brahmans' influence was at first chiefly religious and intellectual, but gradually it assumed also a political character, as the real power behind the throne, and this they retained in full force for many centuries, and to some extent still do so among the native states subject to Great Britain.

In course of ages, after many conflicts with the ruling powers, the Brahmans emerged from the struggle completely victorious. Owing to the theory of their divine calling, which caused them to be looked upon as incarnations of the Highest, they were henceforth the first in the State in the estimate of the people. In this way they secured not only the sole control of the worship of the nation and its religious instructions, but became the sole representatives of Science and Arts, Medicine, Philosophy: indeed the whole circle of human knowledge could only be administered by them.

As a return for these invaluable privileges the Brahman caste had to forego all claims

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on kingly rule, but the succession of their high office went to their own children. They were also restricted in their way of earning a living outside their caste duties, and were above all to be examples of holy living, so that their lives might teach as well as their precepts. They had to be deeply versed in all the rituals and sacrificial services, besides training themselves to become masters of all now so-called secular learning, useful to the community and the nation at large. Thus they became at once the nation's priests, the king's councillors, the guardians and helpers of the oppressed and downtrodden, the educators of the young, the almoners and comforters of the poor, the sick and the dying, lawgivers, judges, men of science, philosophers, and poets. The enormous number of learned works still extant bear witness to their extraordinary industry and profound learning. These ancient Brahmans have left a deeper mark upon the history, science, philosophy, laws, and religions of mankind than any other unit in the world. Thus in order to regulate

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social life all over India, they carefully classified all previously existing domestic and civil rights and duties. They compiled precise laws for the administration of justice, of religious penance, of purification and caste rules. One finds also clearly laid down the whole body of criminal law, as well as laws of property, inheritance, marriage, land laws regulating the village systems, &c. So careful and minute were these laws and regulations that they have stood the test of more than two thousand years, and are still the standards of appeal in India. They are still looked upon with veneration as divine revelations.

Similarly with the language they employed, Sanskrit. They perfected it so much that it became one of wonderful copiousness and of exquisite refinement. Sanskrit at one time was (as Latin became afterwards in Europe) a literary tongue, the medium of intercourse between all educated people. It has become the only repository of ancient Hindu laws, religion, philosophy, and observances. And as they made the Sanskrit the language of

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the learned, so they elaborated for the common people the Pali language, which afterwards broke up into the Prakits or the people's dialect, and now after further mixture with other tongues has given way to the modern Hindu tongue, spoken mostly in north and north-west of India; by over eighty million people. The Dravidian languages in the south of India are quite separate from the Aryan group, their source being Turanian, spoken by fifty-three million people, and as they differ in languages, so they differ in temperament. In poetry, drama, and fiction, as well as other branches of literature, and in the arts, the Brahmans also excelled, although the Dravidians, in the south of India, with their mystic nature, have produced perhaps some even more remarkable works of imagination. In music, the Brahmans invented the seven notes with complex division or modes, and numerous subtones, several centuries B.C.

In medicine, they gained distinction as anatomists and dissectors. Not only was this

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done in their profession of sacrificial priests to extend their sacred knowledge, and also to perfect themselves in surgery, but because they had adopted the Dravidians' notion (as we find also later among the Romans) that by studying the entrails of animals, the future might be revealed. However, when Buddha's mild doctrines and reverence for all life had time to saturate the mind of the Hindus, a reaction set in, and bloody sacrifices were held in disfavour. Hence the Brahmans subsequently avoided contact with blood and left the practice of medicine to a separate branch or family caste.

In astronomy, a Brahman called Aryabhata (A.D. 495) had the distinction of being the first who taught the rotation of the earth round its axis, and explained the causes of eclipses of sun and moon. In the other sciences, the Brahmans, by following the safe mode of experiments and verification preceded by hypothesis, also made great progress, and many inventions and discoveries are said to have emanated from them. In other

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branches of learning, such as grammar, philology, arithmetic, geometry, algebra, and logic, they likewise excelled, and they practically laid the foundation of several of these. Thus for more than fifteen hundred years the literary and scientific schools of the Brahmans have influenced profoundly all branches of human learning. The world therefore owes a great intellectual debt to these gifted sons of the old Aryans, who rose to become leaders in all sciences, arts, and literature, which they either created or fostered, although they became even much more famous to after-ages for their religious and philosophical systems.

To sum up some of the leading results of their intellectual and spiritual work in India:—

1. They gave a learned language for the higher branches of study, and a common language for the masses.

2. They established on a legal basis a fixed form of government.

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3. They established an organised social system.

4. They established an elaborate ritual, which embraced the minutest part of life.

5. They worked out political codes and law books.

6. They elaborated several philosophical systems, of which six have come down to us (*Darsanas*).

7. Their ethical maxims are many of them of unsurpassed sublimity.

8. They made great progress in all departments of scientific knowledge.

9. They produced a vast and wonderful literature apart from their sacred scriptures, such as in poetry, drama, fiction.

10. They fostered a devotional spirit, and as a class were distinguished for their high morality and spirituality. They thus erected all over India the "spiritual Empire," which included the Hindu religion, Hindu learning, rites, laws, manners, and civilisation.

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In short, the Brahman caste can boast of having produced great speculative thinkers, administrators, statesmen, philosophers, and scientists, but more especially religious leaders and seers of the race.

As a class they are to this day men of a high religious and intellectual type, with minds of singular subtlety and elevation.

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The Spiritual Empire of India

THE Brahminical priesthood has been sharply criticised by Europeans for the superstition, idolatry, and ignorance which is found among the Hindus, and for which the Brahmans are held responsible. These critics would, however, be of a different opinion if they knew that the Aryan priesthood was in those early ages only a handful of men compared to the many millions of their adversaries, ranging in position from the reigning Turanians down through many intermediate grades to the untamed cannibals in the south, all of whom the missionaries of the purer faith had to meet in their self-denying toils to convert them.

There is a prevalent idea that when the Aryans invaded India they had only some scattered tribes of savages to fight against, because these are mostly mentioned in their

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war songs. This modern studies have proved to be erroneous. On the contrary, while many of the Aborigines had been subdued by the Dravidians and composed the bulk of their fighting forces, the danger the Aryans encountered was not so much from them singly as it was from their masters, the warlike and trained Turanians and Mongolian rulers, under whom these Aborigines were compelled to fight. These rulers before the Aryans arrived had settled governments, some civilisation, and various religious faiths. These latter were connected with gloomy, revolting, and bloody rites, as might be expected from devil, serpent, and other degrading worships. This state of things multiplied the difficulty of the Aryans in their attempts to convert either the higher or the lower classes to their more spiritual faith, after these hostile nations had been conquered or alliances made with them. It must therefore be borne in mind that the religion in India which goes under the name of Hinduism is a fusion of the Aryans' with the sundry Dravidians' and Aborigines' faiths.

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In many cases the Aryan faith became merely the formal one, submitted to by the natives out of policy, while they still worshipped their old deities. All the same the missionary efforts were not without practical results, for many of the grossest customs were stopped by the Aryans in course of time.

The Aryan priests might of course have started a war of extermination of all the tribes which would not worship according to the Aryans' higher faith, such as the Israelites carried out against the Canaanites, as Mohammed, following their example, carried out in his own mission among the infidels, or as the mediæval Roman Catholics adopted in order to exterminate with fire and sword all those who did not see with them eye to eye, although they all worshipped the same God and the same mediator. But a mere handful of missionaries among millions of wild fanatical tribes had neither the strength of arms to attempt such a mode of securing acceptance of their own beliefs, nor indeed had they the desire to do so, for already in

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these early times they had the good sense to act, where there were differences of religious beliefs, on the principle of a wise tolerance. They knew full well that religious beliefs inherited from many generations and early implanted in young minds become their most sacred treasures, almost part of themselves, and that although consisting perhaps of gross superstitions, they are yet the most difficult to change, even if it be for a higher and purer faith. The Oriental is the child of custom. He clings with an amazing tenacity to the beliefs and customs of his neighbours and forefathers. This kind of people generally worships the past and glories in upholding the faith by which their revered ancestors lived and died, and which therefore they consider is quite good enough for them and theirs. Owing to these and other considerations the Aryans showed their wisdom and moderation by acting upon the slower but more effectual method of compromise. The Aryan missionaries were content to leave many things as they were, although they did not

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approve of them, as long as they made some little progress among the wild tribes, in the way of reforming their faith and practices, trusting as time went on that still greater advance for good would be the result. Indeed they succeeded wonderfully considering the sensual, brutish, and superstitious masses with whom they had to deal.

With so many different religions, the worshippers of which were all deeply attached to their own particular faith, it is not to be wondered at if the wise and devout Brahmans longed to establish a Theocracy in India, to be substituted for these various corrupt religious systems. Has not this been the pious aspirations and prayers of many of the greatest saints on earth in all ages? They have conceived that this was the only and true solution to bring peace, holiness, and happiness down upon a sin-stricken world. Then, they believed, would verily be realised a *oneness* in everything pertaining to religion and the civil life: no schism, no uncertainty, everything plainly laid down by Heaven. With

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the Brahmans this dream of so many an ardent soul took practical shape according to their own energetic and practical character. They also saw that "Theocracy," the Spiritual Empire over the souls of men, was the only true solution in a country like India. It would be the great unifier which would draw all nations, tribes, and tongues into *one* vast community in the most precious things. There would be *one* King in heaven and upon earth; *one* government not only by divine right, but also by divine rule; *one* faith for all; *one* ideal for all; *one* rule of life for all; *one* system of laws for all, high and low; *one* revelation of all truth to all men; *one* caste of devout, devoted, self-sacrificing souls, chosen by God's eternal decrees, chosen for the very purpose of promulgating His decrees upon earth. Chosen also and set apart to commune with Him and present before Him the people's praises, prayers, and sacrifices in His own appointed ways, to become His living representatives upon earth in order to reflect His glory and holiness; shining examples to all

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upon earth to follow, in their lives and conversations.

But the question arose, How was this splendid Ideal to be transformed into an Actuality, this dream converted into a Reality? The Brahmans, wise and foreseeing as they were, built the social structure of this Theocracy upon a threefold foundation, so planned as to make for the spiritual and temporal welfare and happiness of all:—

1. Upon religion.
2. Upon family life.
3. Upon fixed livelihoods.

With regard to the first foundation, as there will be occasion afterwards to go more fully into it, it is sufficient here to say, that with wonderful skill and labour, and with a just appreciation of the needs of humanity, the devout Brahmans constructed a system in which *Religion* permeated the whole social, family, and personal life of the Hindus, down to the minutest details, and all under the supervision and control of the Brahmans, the promulgators of the law of the Highest,

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who were foreordained for this purpose from eternity to devote themselves to these sacred duties. In no other country in the world has the religious spirit sunk so deeply and operated upon the whole so beneficially and so unceasingly for thousands of years as in India, affecting profoundly the whole life, customs, usages, and views of the nation. Much honour is therefore due to the Brahmans, who struck the right keynote in their efforts to establish a well-ordered, peaceful, and permanent society by founding it upon *Religion*.

The second foundation upon which they built the social fabric was upon a regulated and united *family life*. Owing to the narrow outlook or interest in life which has arisen by the caste system, a Hindu, more than any other human being, is thrown back upon his own family circle, there to find his comfort, well-being, and interest, and to identify himself with them in every possible way, for everything beyond his own household or trade guild has little interest to him. Hence there is no

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nation on earth where the family life is so close and intense. A Hindu has not only to provide for his own wife and children, but if occasions arise has likewise to provide for near relatives who may be driven to seek from him shelter and food. So great is the attachment to each other that such a drain upon a man's resources and comfort is looked upon as a sacred duty and even a religious privilege. Hence several generations of old and young will frequently be found living in a Hindu's house. Even this is not enough, for every Hindu has yearly to offer sacrifices according to his rank, which means sometimes heavy expenditure in order to provide spiritual nourishment and priestly supplications for his ancestors' welfare in their next incarnations; and this is not only for a deceased father or mother, but goes back to the third, and even in special cases to the ninth generation. There is therefore a reality, a responsibility, and what some would call a heavy yoke in being the head of a Hindu family, which not only includes the present, but also a series of past

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generations. All members of it are looked upon as of the same household, for those beyond death are still thought able and willing to benefit and bless their dear ones on earth, who therefore gladly and in a filial spirit offer gifts and sacrifices to aid them.

The Hindu family is thus very intense in its joys and sorrows, has acquired a deep significance, and is looked upon as a religious sacrament of the most solemn kind. The family life begun on earth is in their eyes continued for ever in a man's future existence. The past, the present, and the future are all linked in one unbroken family chain which stretches from earth to heaven, from time to eternity. Owing to this, the Hindu nation, in spite of all the convulsions it has been subject to for ages, in spite of dynasties rising and falling, and everything changing around them, maintain in their humble and simple family life an unbroken front towards the world. For this also the Brahmans have to be thanked and are to be honoured. Bishop Caldwell, after

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many years residence in India, wrote: "I admire much that I see amongst the people of India; I admire their religiousness, I admire their temperance, I admire their patience and gentleness and courtesy, I admire their care of their relations to the farthest removed, and in many particulars I admire what remains of the primeval framework of their village system and their social system."

Upon the *third* foundation the Brahmans built the caste system, parcelling out society in definite occupations. This caste system, in spite of some drawbacks, worked well in those early ages, whether looked upon from a national, a political, or simply from a social and utilitarian point of view. The caste system or social strata, which is probably the chief reason for the stability of Indian society, arose out of three elements:—

1. Distinctions of nationality.
2. Distinctions of livelihood.
3. Distinctions arising from merits (*Karma*).

The caste system, looked upon merely as a trade guild or a union, has proved in the past

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of enormous value to the state, and might still to some extent be altered to fit in with modern views of life. Among some of the advantages arising out of these primitive trade guilds to protect and help the workers comprising them, may be mentioned:—

1. Each guild ensures the proper training of the youth in its own special craft.

2. It makes rules for the conduct of its business.

3. It regulates supply, output, and prices. There is therefore a co-operative or joint system among the common Hindus.

4. It promotes good feeling by feasts and social gatherings.

5. It allows none of its members to starve. Hence it acts as a mutual assurance society, and takes the place of a poor-law in India. The importance of this cannot be over-estimated.

6. The severest social penalty which can be inflicted upon a Hindu is to be put out of his caste. It is therefore a salutary check upon conduct.

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7. A further advantage is that each caste is a powerful check on its members, for it imposes penalties and punishes breach of caste rules by fines and excommunication. Therefore caste has been useful in promoting industry, and teaching self-sacrifices for the welfare of the caste to which each belongs. It has also been useful in securing subordination of the individual to an organised body of its own caste, members who, being under a Theocracy, had their rules or laws from God Himself. Caste rules are part and parcel of their religion. Indeed, caste to a Hindu has become the essence of his religion, apart from the ceremonial services. These rules influence the whole of his life and conduct, and to violate the laws of a caste is considered a heinous sin, as they are considered identical with the moral law.

8. The caste system has restrained vice, has prevented pauperism, and in a country at one time seething with veiled or open mutiny, has made political combinations almost impossible. It has, therefore, done

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good service both to the rulers and the ruled.

9. Caste also tends to contentment, and there is less harassment from the absence of continual competition, which, being regulated by the guilds, makes society orderly and progressive at the same time. It has been well said that in India every trade, every profession, every guild, every tribe, every clan has drifted into a caste. The members of a caste not only have their own special objects of worship, selected from the Hindu Pantheon or adopted into it, but they exclusively act together and exclusively marry into their own caste. Thus a solidity is given to all groups of men, hence the old natural elements of society have been preserved under the influence of caste in an extraordinary completeness along with the ancient institutions and ideas which are their appendage. In short, it is as if every caste community formed itself into a little republic, jealously keeping itself separate from the rest.

The caste system has maintained its hold not only because it was believed to be part

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and parcel of Theocracy, in which God's laws are the statute-book of the nation, but because it also appealed to the religious sense of the people themselves. The underlying truth which guided the Brahmans was that the inequalities found in all human society has its counterpart in the constitution of the universe itself. It was seen by them that there does exist an eternal unchangeable relation of mutual dependence between all things in the Cosmos. Hence the division of society into castes was evidently part of God's plan of regular gradation and mutual help. Nature is seen to work on the principle of division of labour. To reach perfection, Nature resorts to specialisation of work. Nature has introduced variety in humanity, whether seen in bodily forms, in mental gifts, or in spiritual visions. Some people seem born to rule, having the capacity to organise and to plan: others have little brains, but brawny arms; these make capital servants, but cannot rise higher. Some develop minds of meditative cast: others are

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practical; and so on in endless combinations. Hence the Brahmans taught that the solidarity of mankind does not mean the equality of man. It means that humanity is an organism and that the head rules the body. The weak point here is that the priesthood claimed by divine right the *sole* headship over all others.

The caste system promoted "brotherhood," but not in the wide sense used nowadays. The conception that the whole of humanity is one in origin and one in destiny was far and away beyond the grasp of the early races of mankind, who lived in constant warfare and hatred against one another. The ancient idea of brotherhood on the contrary was confined to the most narrow compass of family life, or to their own class, or to blood covenants. Outside this charmed circle the word "brotherhood" had no meaning to them.

In consequence of this the Brahmans in order to account for the inequalities in humanity introduced the idea of "species," as is done in the lower creation. Thus they argued, that as

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the spirited and intelligent horse, and the gluttonous, ugly, and stupid pig which wallows in the mire, are both four-footed beasts and have other things in common, yet in their essentials belong to different species, which can never breed together or have things in common, so likewise in the human society. There they considered that the principle of species acts as universally and unceasingly as among the animals. From this they inferred that it was impossible for a fair-skinned, high-spirited Aryan to believe that the grovelling, sensual, black-skinned Aborigines, who revelled in degrading practices, who were people of dwarfish stature, flat-nosed, thick-lipped, bow-legged, filthy, repulsive, and more like demons, not only in their appearance, but also in their character and cannibal practices—that these abominable creatures could belong to the same noble species as themselves. Here surely were two different species, showing a wide impassable gulf. Hence the Brahmans in their patriotism and religious fervour sacrificed everything to their ideal of social and racial purity as well as to their pride of blood,

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for purity of caste could only be preserved by purity of blood, and the most obvious way to preserve this was by preventing intermarriage and family intercourse, as also prohibiting the sharing of food and living with other castes. The Brahmans, deeply impressed by this belief of "species" being found in humanity as in the lower creation, unflinchingly applied it rigidly to the whole of the caste system in their Theocracy. Seeing that each caste belonged to a different specie, no caste could marry into another, and there resulted a vast number of independent organised social groups, each religiously keeping to itself.

One way of solving the caste system was by the theory of "species." Another was the theory of "succession," *i.e.* that gifts and abilities descended to the children in strict succession, as did the property, the land, or a man's other possessions. This conception arose from the notion held everywhere in those ages that by confining a trade to one family, from one generation to another, the acquired tendencies and aptitudes would descend to each succeed-

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ing race, and the work would be better and more easily done. In India, where this system has been in force for so many ages, and stamped with divine authority, the defect in the assumption has never been fully realised. But the British Aryans, who stand for freedom of choice of work and trade, point out that children very often show quite different inclinations and gifts than their father in his particular calling, so that the old argument is only partially true.

The Brahmans lastly based the caste system upon *birth*, which again means "a divine election based upon merits," for whatever caste a man is born into, to this he must belong to his death. In order to justify God's dealings to man, the Brahmans pointed out that our past, our present, and our future existence are one complete whole, and must not be judged from a fragmentary part. If one should ask why he was not born a Brahman in this life, but into a lower caste, and whether this did not prove God's favouritism to some, the Indian sages would reply that a man's entrance into this life in a particular caste

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was not done by divine favour at all, but on the basis of strictest justice. It was in fact a case of merit pure and simple, and this merit again rested with the man himself, for as he lived in the present probation so would his future caste be selected for him. If he loyally and devotedly kept the caste rules in which he was born each time, his next birth would necessarily and as a right be into a higher caste until he too would reach the Brahmans' high but responsible caste. There was therefore encouragement to every faithful Hindu in the divinely appointed caste system, no room for jealousy, no room either for despair. Being born in a particular caste did not seem a matter of vital importance. It was accepted with perfect cheerfulness, seeing that the stay in the present caste, low as it might be, would only last for a short time, and that the wise thing was to prepare by pious living for being worthy to advance to the next highest caste, in the next transmigration of the soul.

Western nations complain that a man's natural abilities and ambition have no full

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scope under the caste system. The Brahmans do not see it in this light; with them everything must come in its proper time and place. Their system allows no trampling upon or crushing others in the feverish haste to shoot ahead of them, inspired by ambition, vanity, lust of gold or greed. If a man should feel within himself that he had the gifts of a world conqueror, like an Alexander the Great, while meantime he practised the honourable trade of a tailor in his caste, the Brahmans would not gainsay or laugh him to scorn. They would simply recommend him to keep his ambition in check and stick to his craft until in due time in the course of his transmigrations he would be born into the warrior caste where he would find full scope for his military genius and courage in the day of battle. The western nations where the republican spirit is flourishing give a man full scope to develop himself in *this* life, even to raise himself from the lowest to the highest step of the ladder of social promotion. But in the east this present life is considered as only a fleeting existence

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with which the Hindus need not be so much concerned. If they do their best in the temporary sphere or caste to which God has called them, then they are on the high-road to honours, high rank and endless blessings. A Brahman would thus fully agree with the Apostle Paul when he said in one of his epistles: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" (1 Cor. vii. 20).

We have considered shortly the Hindu Theocracy in its various aspects inspired and directed by the Brahmans and their descendants to this day. Other nations in antiquity introduced Theocracy, but none of these have survived except in India. There are no doubt many attractive features connected with a theocractic government where the civil and religious life of a nation is placed under the charge of God's reputed deputies or representatives. If these are the best, wisest, and most devout men, one would naturally expect that no system devised by the wit of man would be in better hands for the prosperity of all.

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And yet, although attractive in theory, in practice it has been found defective. It is not so much the men at the helm of affairs who are to be blamed, as it is the fault of the principles upon which the whole system of Theocracy is founded.

Theocracy is conservatism in a despotic and oppressive form, claimed to be under a divine sanction. It is, however, the general experience that organised groups of men are obstinate conservators of traditional laws, customs, observances, and institutions, especially when these have a religious sanction, as was the case in India. Where there is no light and freedom in the nation, stagnation and decay commence to work like cancer in the body politic. If a Theocracy could be administered by angels from heaven, it would no doubt be a perfect arrangement, although a Brahman would point out that the priesthood in India occupied even a higher rank, being God's incarnations upon earth who claimed having influence in gaining favours from Heaven for the people under them, which no angel possessed. But even if

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the Hindus as a rule were ready to admit these extravagant claims, yet the drawback would still be, that the sacerdotal caste were not like unprejudiced statesmen in ruling the country for God, but that they had large vested interests to look after both in Church and in State, which had been handed down to them from their ancestors as sacred heirlooms. To these they tenaciously clung, defying all opposition, and naturally they endeavoured to hand them down to their children. They even considered it their duty to add to these ancient vested interests and emoluments. Most likely every other class in India would have done the same if they had had the chance. It was the easier for the priesthood in the zenith of their influence to do this, as having been invested with absolute powers over high and low, they claimed also the control over demons and angels to aid them to preserve their theocratic rule on earth.

To sum up the glaring drawbacks in the Brahman's system of Theocracy:—

1. The priesthood in India held despotic powers.

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2. They also claimed divine powers.

3. They, however, were not disinterested in ruling the nation, for they had under their charge belonging to their class, valuable vested interests.

4. They succeeded in increasing these enormously, but looked upon them as further gifts from Heaven for their labours on earth.

5. They were strongly prejudiced against any proposals of a progressive nature, as they saw that their chief interest lay in preserving things as had been handed down to them, whether in Church or State. Hence only the old was revered and encouraged, and all progress in the national life came to a standstill.

Well meaning they no doubt were and most of them saintly and devout men, but being men more accustomed to a contemplative life than to worldly action and rule, they became the prey of designing, ambitious, and unscrupulous adventurers, who managed to get the power of rule in their hands, with the result that the people were misgoverned and oppressed, and everywhere tyranny and cor-

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ruption gained the upper hand, until at last ruin overtook the system of Theocracy.

The Brahmans, however, still think that their "sacerdotal" absolute government was after all best for India, and they triumphantly point out that under the British Aryans the country is still under a despotism. It is true that the present authority is also absolute, but whereas Theocracy kept the nation in leading strings as children with no intention of ever educating or training them to anything higher, the present imperial power exists solely for the good and the progress of the people. It is paternal, benevolent, enlightened, is straining every nerve to educate the whole mass to fit them for self-government. Already the first steps have been taken in entrusting them with municipal and other public affairs for the proper government of the State. Above all, the present imperial power looks forward to the distant day when the education and moral progress have been so much advanced, that India can be safely left to take up the reins and rule itself in parliamentary form as a Crown Colony

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of the whole Empire, liberal, free, and prosperous.

There have been two different principles at work among the Indian Aryans, and their kinsmen the British Aryans, which to a great extent account for their different civilisations. In the former "Centralisation" has always had the upper hand, and reached there its fullest expression. The ruling power has the complete and despotic control over all that pertains to the government of the nation. Everything is done for the people without consulting them. The responsibility is shifted from the individual to the ruler, who takes the initiative in every movement as caprice or ambition may dictate; and naturally where there is no check to extravagance or misgovernment the result in feeble or wicked hands becomes disastrous to the prosperity of the nation, and destroys its manhood. The people under such despotic rulers, if they are not slaves already, by-and-by sink to the level of slaves, losing the love of liberty and patriotism which

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free men possess who have a voice in the management of the government of their own country.

In strong contrast to the slavish submission of the Hindus, the British Aryans have been the champions of the maxim which ruled in their ancestors' homes, and which may be summed up as "Individualism," where the private individual claims to be a sharer and co-worker in all that concerns the welfare of either the Church or the State, of which he is an integral part. He is besides the guardian of his own faith, trusts to his own reason and judgment in all matters, cultivates self-control, and desires to give fair play to all. He believes strongly in the elevating and invigorating blessing of work, and with indomitable spirit fights his own battles in life. The British Aryan, if he has the spirit of his forefathers, flatly refuses to give his soul in the keeping of any sacerdotal system, or submit to the rule of despotic powers in worldly affairs. He submits the claims of authority to reason and conscience as the ultimate arbiters, and allows nothing to

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stand between God and the soul in its communion with the unseen. He loves liberty for himself and claims it for others. These manly characteristics have given the mental and moral virility which still distinguish the British Aryans wherever they go; hence they above all others emphasise the *moral* factor in life as being supreme in all personal, social, political, national and international relations, for upon the uplifting and nobility of personal *character* they base the regeneration of society and the condition of ultimate civilisation in the world.

Of course Individualism has its drawbacks, as Centralisation has, when carried to excess. Only in the "golden mean," where they both work in harmony, they become a nation's strength. "Individualism" is the dynamic force in the State as "Centralisation" is the static force: the one progressive, the other conservative. All great reforms, whether in Church or State, can nearly always be traced to the initiative of single individuals often risen from the humblest walks in life, who yet, by their genius, enthusiasm, and self-denials

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have burst the trammels of conventionality, corrupt customs, and despotic powers, and thereby brought liberty to the downtrodden and light to darkened souls. In reading history it is remarkable how, over and over again, it has been from single individuals that influences for good have emanated to stimulate and bless a whole community, even the whole world. Therefore all honour to the British Aryans and other modern nations who know how to combine the two forces by which a nation can only prosper, thus keeping in check all attempts at despotism getting the upper hand either in Church or State, for want of which restraint India has suffered so long in the past and is still suffering in its sacerdotal system.

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The Sacred Scriptures

RIG VEDA

We have now sketched in rapid outlines the career of the two important branches of the Aryan race in their outward estates and fortunes.

But a still more interesting study awaits one who goes deeper and tries to search out the inner springs of beliefs, conduct, and aspirations which animated these profound and gifted Aryan thinkers. In doing so many spiritual treasures, many beautiful germs of thought will be brought to light, which have seldom been surpassed in expression or depth of feeling in the literature of any other of the ancient nations.

For this purpose it is necessary to present a short panorama of the Aryan religious systems and philosophical speculations. The first book

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to engage attention is the celebrated Rig Veda, which is so to say the foundation of the rest.

The Aryans, like the rest of humanity, must have emerged from a primitive stage of life, of which no historical record exists. The Rig Veda, however, gives proofs of this evolution, for we find in it a gradual ascent from the lower conceptions to the higher, from the worship of the physical forces found among the most ancient hymns to the recognition in the later hymns of a spiritual worship.

The Rig Veda is the earliest and most celebrated collection or Samhita of the sacred literature of the Aryans. The word Veda means sacred knowledge, and the word Rig, to praise or celebrate in song; hence the meaning of Rig Veda may be stated to be the Aryans' devotional service of praise.

Some of these hymns may date back to their homes on the Steppes, but most of the war songs were composed and in use when the Aryans entered India in their campaigns against their enemies (Dasyus) on the north-western frontier of that vast continent.

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The hymns consist of lyric poetry wherein their Gods are praised, heroic deeds extolled, and protection and victory asked for, as well as the various blessings which constitute the sum of human welfare, with outpourings of the heart in praise and prayers.

The Gods were not invoked in hymns and prayers which were of simple unadorned language as become nomadic shepherds, but were composed with great skill and taste in set metres, called "Chandas," showing how perfectly their ears had thus early in their history been trained to harmony in sound, this being considered by them as specially well pleasing to their Gods.

The worship of the Gods had already in these early ages assumed a fixed form, and consisted of a fivefold arrangement:—

1. Sacrifices, called Tajna.
2. Invocation, called Avahana.
3. Prayer, called Prathana.
4. Praise, called Stuti.
5. Meditation, called Upasana.

For centuries their sacred songs, when

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writing was unknown, were committed to memory. Hence their ancient wisdom was purely mnemonic. After writing was introduced the priests still had to learn the whole sacred service by heart. Even to-day a great part of their sacred knowledge is learned by heart by the students and priests in India as a discipline essential to intellectual life. At last, after many centuries had elapsed and the Aryans had settled down in their new homes, when these old hymns were threatened to be superseded by newer hymns composed in honour of newer divinities, a gradual attempt was made to commit to writing in Sanskrit what still could be gathered together of the ancestors' religious life in song.

This collection consists of ten Mandalas (circles). Of these as many as eight were contributed by the descendants of leading families of priests from their private collections. Their names are given: Vaisvamitra, Gotamues, Gritsamadas, Vrihaduktha, Nodhas, Kakshivan, Kanvas, and Pavamana. The hymns of the two latter poet priests will be

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found in the first and eighth books of Rig Veda.

The collection called Samhita contains 1017 hymns, with 11 supplementary hymns inserted in the middle of the eighth book, in all 1028 hymns, each on an average of ten verses. Some of these are prayers (Mantras), others praises (Suktas).

The first seven books resemble each other in character and arrangement. The hymns of the Maṇdalas from the second to the seventh belong to a particular family. The others include a variety of authors.

As time passed away the ancient relics of sacred songs were preserved with the greatest veneration by the descendants of the Aryans. They came to be looked upon as divine productions, so that not a single line was considered to be the work of human authors. The infallible authority of the Veda was held to be so manifest as to require no proof, and to be entirely beyond the province of argument or human reason (see Manu ii. 10 and i. 3). It was inspired knowledge ("Sruta"), and even

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believed to be the breathings of Brahm (see Sayana). The utmost care was taken to keep these inspired songs uncorrupted for the use of future ages, and systematic indexes were prepared. The most perfect is given as that of Katyayana. As early as about 600 B.C. every verse, every word, every syllable had been carefully counted. The number of verses varied from 10,402 to 10,622, according as they were divided, but the exact words were given as 153,826, while the syllables numbered 432,000, all written in the old Sanskrit.

From a literary and national point of view the care bestowed upon these productions had some foundation, for the Rig Veda contains all that has been saved of the ancient sacred treasures. Even to this day most devout Hindus believe that the Vedas were eternal, and that they existed in the mind of the deity before the beginning of time; that Brahma, after framing the world, created the metre of four lines called Gayatri, and that from these the four Vedas sprang into existence. Other Hindu thinkers look upon the Vedas as

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having been written by the poets of the ancient Aryans, but under supernatural guidance and inspiration. This is now a very general belief in India, and in confirmation it is pointed out that in Rig Veda viii. 52, 4 it is written: "Indra was of old the inspirer of the poets and the augmenter of their hymns." Another poet in Rig Veda vi. 47, 10 expresses himself as follows: "O Indra, whatever I now may utter, longing for Thee, do Thou accept it, give me divine inspiration."

European scholars, however, who have studied the question are of the opinion that there was no more divine inspiration at work when composing these ancient hymns than there has been in the hymns written in our own times, say a devout spirit and literary gifts combined. Thus they point out that the poets of old tried to improve upon the most ancient hymns, by composing new hymns in more elaborate and beautiful compositions, so as to give more gratification to the Gods, who they thought would at length become wearied with the stale repetition of the same hymns in their honours,

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service after service: "As we have now glorified Thee by our newest hymns, do Thou bring to us wealth and food with progeny" (i. 12, 11). Also, "Prepare, O God Soma, the success of our newest, most recent hymns, and as of old cause the lights to shine upon us" (ix. 9, 8).

Many of the hymns were considered unfailing spells, and as such became the sacred war songs of a whole tribe. These gifted people already in these early ages showed their poetic nature by their love, not only for poetry, but also for music. Their songs were set to music, and as they here also transferred their own notions in these matters to the Gods on high, so they conceived that different deities had partiality for different kinds of metres, and for different tunes in which to sing the hymns. Each hymn had its appropriate metre according to the subject treated of to whom it was offered, and the tune varied in the same way. As time went on, however, the priesthood, partly out of superstition, also out of fanatical zeal, expanded this idea to extreme lengths.

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The priests who recited the verses of the Rig Veda at the sacrificial services were called Hotris. They were required to be conversant with the whole of the Rig Veda, having had especially to learn all the sacrificial hymns by heart, word for word. It was only they who knew the proper metre to employ in asking for particular blessings. There were at least eight different metres to use on different occasions, and it was of course quite impossible for the common worshippers to approach the Gods without the aid of priests. If the Hotris properly intoned the sacred words and in the proper metres, it was thought that the result was unfailing. The profound idea at the root of this conception was that the Universe was founded upon harmony; that although struggle is the law of the Cosmos, yet it is only as a means to arrive at "Harmony," which is the reconciliation of opposites.

With regard to the leading conceptions of God in the Rig Veda, there seems little

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doubt that the ancient Aryans were originally Monotheists in the ancestral homes. That is to say, they had the monotheistic conception of a divine Unity pervading the myriad manifestations of existence, a Unity inexpressibly higher than and separate from anything else. This Unity they expressed under the beautiful image of the name so familiar to us of "Our Father in Heaven," or in the old Sanskrit, Dyaus (Sky), Pitar (Father). This name, or simply "Dyaus," is found in several single verses in Rig Veda. However, by the time that the hymns in the Rig Veda were being collected, the conception of Dyaus had receded into the background and apparently played an unimportant part in their cult. This was also the case with their kinsmen, the eastern Aryans (the Iranians), who worshipped Zeuranee Akrane (the Eternal One), or in Sanskrit, Tad Ekam, the reason being that in both cases, in course of time, this central Unity, this uncreated All in All, was considered to be too sublime, too lofty, to interest Himself in

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the petty affairs of men. They conceived that He had delegated the government of the world to ministering spirits of high rank, in the same way as earthly rulers were known to act only through the medium of those who assisted them in the administration of their empires. In India there came to be no monotheism which did not include devout polytheism; the worship of the Highest of All through proxies.

These exalted beings upon whom the burden of ruling the realms of nature rested, were generally conceived by the Aryan Sages under a threefold aspect:—

1. Those who ruled the all-embracing Heaven.

2. Those who ruled the Earth and all it contains.

3. Those who ruled the region of Air or Atmosphere.

It must be remembered that, besides the masculine idea of God, there was also in antiquity the conception of God under the feminine aspect. In the Rig Veda traces

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are found of the two ideas fused so that the Unity of Beinghood was looked upon as a "conjugal" Union under the name of Dyava Prithivi. The pair is thus celebrated in six hymns. Later on a "parental" Union was established and the Beinghood was now conceived as only complete in a "family" circle. The "feminine" aspect was called Aditi (*i.e.* the Eternal or Boundless One), the personification of the visible infinite, the endless expanse beyond the earth, beyond the clouds, beyond the sky and beyond the starry worlds. Aditi was generally conceived as a mother who had seven (*i.e.* many) sons (Adityas) upon whom the government of the world had devolved. Of these the eldest son Varuna became the most celebrated. The word meant the "overarching sky," and he was represented as ruling both the physical and the moral order of the world (rita). The hymns which are addressed to him in the Rig Veda form the most exalted portion. In these are described, in glowing pictures, Varuna's greatness, his might, wisdom and

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justice, his kindness and sinlessness. In his capacity of Viceroy he was addressed as the all-wise creator, preserver and ruler of the world, the omniscient protector of the good, the sin-avenger and also the sin-forgiving; being holy, just, and yet full of pity. It was Varuna who gave the pious after death a new and blessed life, uniting them with the Gods on high and with their dear ones who had departed before them. One remarkable thing is that while the ancient Aryans turned to other divinities for success, riches, victory or spoils, it was to Varuna alone that they turned for forgiveness of sins of every kind, even those which had been done in ignorance.

One of the verses in Rig Veda reads as follows:—

Forgive the wrongs committed by our Father.
What we ourselves have sinned in mercy pardon.
My own misdeeds, do thou, O God, take from me,
And for another's sin let me not suffer.
If consciously we have erred, or all unconscious,
According to our sin, do not thou punish.

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Here are a few lines from the fifth Mandala, Hymn 85, to Varuna:—

Sing forth a hymn sublime and solemn,
Grateful to glorious Varuna, imperial ruler.
I will declare the mighty deeds of glorious Varuna,
The Lord immortal,
Who, standing in the firmament, hath meted the earth
With the sun as with a measure.
If we have sinned against the man who loves us,
Have ever wronged a brother, friend or comrade,
The neighbour ever with us, or a stranger,
O Varuna, remove from us the trespass,
Cast all these sins away like loosened fetters,
O Varuna, let us be thine own beloved.

In another hymn a guilt-laden sinner cries:—

I commune thus with myself,
"When may I again approach Varuna?
What offering will he deign to accept?
What offering without showing anger?
When shall I, my soul reviving,
Enjoy again his favour?
Humbly, as a servant, will I make reparation to him,
Merciful that he is, that once more I may become blameless."

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In Book x. 89, 3, there is a prayer to Varuna:—

O bright and powerful God, through want of strength
I erred and went astray. Have mercy, spare me, mighty Lord.

Finally, from some of the best-known hymns addressed by the poets to Varuna:—

i. 25, 1. Whatever laws of thine, O God, O Varuna,—
As we are men,
Day after day we violate them.

2. Give us not a prey to death,
To be destroyed by thee in wrath,
To thy fierce anger when displeased.

3. To gain thy mercy, Varuna,
With hymns we bind thy heart,
As binds the charioteer his tethered horse.

10. Varuna, true to holy law,
Sits down among his people.
He, most wise, sits there to govern all.

11. From thence perceiving he beholds
All wondrous things,
Both what hath been
And what hereafter will be done.

16. Yearning for the wide seeing one
My thoughts move onward unto him
As kine unto their pastures move.

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28TH HYMN

I beg renown of Varuna, the mighty,
The god exceeding kind to him who worships.
O mighty Varuna, now and hereafter,
Even as of old, will we speak forth thy worship,
For in thyself, infallible God,
Thy statutes never to be moved
Are fixed as on a mountain.

85TH HYMN

Sing forth a hymn sublime and solemn,
Grateful to glorious Varuna, imperial ruler.

86, 2. With mine own heart
I commune on the question:
"How Varuna and I may be united?
What gift of mine will he accept unangered?
When may I calmly look and find him gracious?"

With Varuna were therefore specially connected the beliefs:—

1. In the forgiveness of sin.

2. In man's personal immortality.

3. That this immortal life is the free gift of heaven.

From this short sketch it can be gathered how far advanced the early Aryans were in spiritual conceptions.

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AGNI

Around the teaching of the Divinities who ruled the *Earth* there were also many beautiful conceptions. The chief of these spirits was known as "Agni," the God of Fire, of whom one of the Rig Veda poets says (i. 143):—

All searching is his beam, the gleaming of his light,
His, the all beautiful, of beauteous face and glance,
The changing shimmer like that floats upon the stream,
So Agni's rays gleam ever bright and never cease.

Agni was one of the most prominent and beloved of the Viceroys on High. Like the Iranians, the Aryans seem always to have worshipped fire, this being one of their earliest symbols of the Divine in manifestation. They both probably learned it first in their wanderings on the borders of the Caspian Sea and other places in Asia, where the burning oil wells unceasingly shoot up the pillars of fire night and day. Agni is celebrated in more than 200 hymns in Rig Veda, and the first hymn is dedicated to him, and many other

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books begin with hymns to him. He appealed to the Aryans as their best friend among divine beings. He was never afar off. He presided over the daily altar fire. He was the house-priest in each humble dwelling. The rubbing of a few sticks brought him into their presence. He was near and kind to all. Agni was worshipped in the fire kindled in the morning. The whole family gathered round it, regarding it with love and awe, as at once a friend and a priest who deigned to sit in the very dwellings with the humblest of men. At sunset Agni was the only divinity left on earth to protect mortals till the following dawn; his bright beams then shine abroad and dispel the demons of darkness.

Agni was seen in the lightning as he was seen in the sunshine and in the altar fire. Hence he was often joined with other Divinities. Again, Agni formed a link between earth and heaven. It was Agni who was conceived as the *High* priest of heaven and of men: he who above all knew the sacred

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institutions, the most propitious time to present men's sacrifices and offerings. The early Aryans therefore presented to him, as the Mediator, their prayers, songs, and sacrificial gifts that he might safely carry these to the Heavenly Powers on high. On the other hand, in his position, as Heaven's High Priest, Agni brought down the gifts from heaven to the worshippers on earth, and only by his all prevailing mediation came success. He was the favourite of people on the earth, as he was the favourite of the Gods in Heaven. Agni had still other claims upon the gratitude and love of the earth's inhabitants, for he was also conceived as the victorious conqueror of darkness and all evil spirits. Agni protected all treasures, and was the medium from whom proceeded all gifts of fortune. He was the welcome guest in every home, a beloved family friend. He brought wealth with bounteous hands into the house of those who loved him.

In these thoughts we find how the human soul even in those early ages traced its blessings to heavenly aid, with whom it was in

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daily direct communion by sympathy and love, by gratitude, by offerings which it thought most acceptable to its God, all of which linked it in childlike faith to the unseen and eternal.

Here are a few verses from the first hymn to Agni in the Rig Veda :—

I worship Agni, house priest he,
And priest divine of sacrifice,
The oblation priest who giveth wealth.

Agni, by seers of old adored,
To be adored by those to-day,
May he the Gods bring here to-day.

May Agni, who oblation gives,
The wisest, true, most famous priest,
This god with all the gods approach.

Thou dost good to every man
That serves thee, Agni, even this
Is thy true virtue Angeras.

To thee, O Agni, day by day
Do we pray at eve and dawn
Come, bringing lowly reverence.

From these few verses it will be realised how it came about that the Aryans thought it the first duty of each head of a family to sacrifice to Agni, and to nourish, cherish, and

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honour him in other ways, he being to them the chief and greatest friend of their race; the heaven-sent Agni to whom 3030 gods on high made joyful obeisance — the favourite both of God and men.

INDRA

Of the third group, the Divinities of the middle sphere, or the atmosphere, Indra gradually became most celebrated, especially when the Aryans started on their warlike expeditions, while earlier he was the one who relieved them from drought, by bringing rain on the parched ground of the steppes. To him were addressed most of the hymns in the Rig Veda, some 250 hymns, after he had become their national god of battles. As the God of the atmosphere he was depicted as riding upon the storm clouds and hurling the lightning with his hand—brave, daring, and strong. He first became celebrated among the earlier Aryans, before entering India, as the conqueror of the celestial dragon and all

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its brood which fill the atmosphere, the waters, and the earth. It was Indra who conquered and blessed the earth with thunderstorms after having vanquished the dragon who kept back the blessing from the Aryans. As in the battle with these Vitras, all power yielded to Indra, so he became to the Aryans the god of battle, the ideal of an ever-fighting, never-conquered hero, the friend and ally of the early Aryans who, when conquering their enemies, gave the credit to Indra for his mighty unseen help.

Some illustrations I have already given. Here are a few more:—

i. 11. It is Indra all our songs extol,
Of warriors chiefest warrior he,
Lord, truest Lord for booty's gain.

In friendship, Indra, strong as thine,
Naught will we fear, O Lord of strength,
To thee we our laudations sing,
The conqueror, unconquered.

Also in vi. 30:—

Great hast thou grown, Indra, for deeds heroic,
Ageless is he alone, alone gives riches.

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Also in i. 32:—

I will proclaim the manly deeds of Indra,
The first that he performed, the lightning wielder.
He smote the dragon, then released the waters
And cleft the caverns of the lofty mountains.
Indra's fierce foe sank down to lasting darkness,
Heaven and earth themselves bow down before him,
Before his might the very mountains tremble.

While to the ordinary Aryans, Indra was a mighty warrior, to the later philosophers of the Aryans he, along with Agni and Varuna, was looked upon merely as the transient manifestation of a spirituality lying behind nature, whether conceived as the Heavenly Father, as the Heavenly Spouse, or as the Heavenly Parent with offspring.

The Aryans had early found, as we all sooner or later find to our cost, even in these civilised and comparatively peaceful and easy times, that earthly existence is rooted in "struggle," that this world is like a battle-field for each and all, whether in its physical, its economical, its moral, or its spiritual aspect; the ascent towards perfection is only through struggle. These early worshippers

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naturally fell back upon an unseen Almighty Power to shield and to defend them where their own puny strength was insufficient. This conception they personified in the symbolic figure of Indra, God's Viceroy of divine strength to aid the Aryans in their conflicts with overwhelming numbers of fierce and treacherous enemies. In the same way, they stood in need of Divine Wisdom and a moral Governor of the Universe to guide them through life in wisdom's way and in the paths of righteousness, and this ideal was personified in Varuna, Heaven's righteous and yet merciful ruler. And lastly, besides Divine Power and Divine Wisdom and Righteousness, they stood in need of Divine Love to adore, to worship, to imitate, to fill their lives with joy and happiness, and this soul hunger they satisfied by idealising Divine Love and helpfulness under the attractive conception of the beautiful Agni, the darling of their hearts and their homes.

Defective as these religious thoughts appear to us, yet they contain much that is true, uplifting, and beautiful.

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In course of ages after the Aryans had settled down to their new homes and a learned class had appeared, the worship of this trinity of God's representatives, with myriads of lesser divinities, passed through many stages until the human mind began to outgrow its child-like simplicity and learned to reason more correctly, and came, as in the case of the later Aryans, to excel in abstract thinking above most other nations. Yet it is remarkable that although both the West and the East have practically arrived at Monism in Philosophy and the conception of Monotheism in Religion, the latter has remained with the eastern nations mostly as a purely abstract idea not filling the heart with love to the source of all, whereas with the western nations the belief has advanced to a practical worship of one God, whose character is perfect love and perfect beauty in all His attributes, and whom we must worship and love direct without any medium. This conviction has swept away as unnecessary and even mischievous all beliefs or worship of lesser divinities, or images, or

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worship through a sacerdotal priesthood standing between the soul of man and the Soul of Souls.

One finds in these early Indo-Aryans, as in their kinsmen, the later Aryans who emigrated to northern Europe, and from whom sprang the Vikings, the same spirit of progress and freedom, the same daring, valour, and enterprise; the same high conceptions of the social and family life; the same spirit of equality and brotherhood among the tribes—love of truth, faithfulness, and uprightness; the same claim for liberty of conscience and untrammelled worship of the Gods, upon whom they looked with reverence, admiration, and even with love, believing that every worshipper had direct access to God without the intervention of a priesthood, which in India ultimately claimed to be heaven's selected channel of connection between the worshippers and the worshipped. In other words, in the early ages of the Aryans the religious life took its rise in trust and love to the Gods on High, and every soul could claim a direct communion with the Gods with

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whom it considered it as a co-worker upon earth, to make it happier and better, as it desired the Gods would be co-workers in its own soul to make it like themselves in the beauty of holiness.

The society of the early Aryans was founded upon freedom within the circle of wise laws to protect society, a commonwealth of free-men based upon equality in the eye of the law, in equality of opportunity to rise in society, and each to work out his own best without caste or despotism to throw difficulties in the way — a society based upon mutual help and mutual service; a society where the family circle was the centre of everything lovable, true, good, noble, and self-sacrificing; where the woman was free, honoured, and on an equality with man, and monogamy was the rule not the exception; where the home was the cradle of heroes, of every manly virtue, and of every womanly grace and devotion. Seeing such an attractive and noble picture of past ages, no wonder if the modern Hindu, saddened by the superstitions and stag-

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nation of the society in which he lives and moves, looks back with admiration and wistful glances to his noble ancestors, desiring to restore the lost ideals in the modern life of Hindu society, only leaving out all that is defective, superstitious, immature, or unfitted for present times.

But if the ancient Aryans' principles of freedom, progress, and energy are to be restored, the Hindus will find that the British Aryan race which now rules India, and are their true kinsmen, possess exactly the characteristics and the gifts and graces which distinguished their own ancestors, and of which the modern Indo-Aryans stand in need. The British Aryans show a living example how their revered ancestors would have advanced in civilisation, in science, in a purer and a more democratic religion, with endless progress in front of them, conquering nature and thereby promoting health, comfort, and happiness, if the Indo-Aryans' noble ideals had not been swamped by the debased Dravidians and the still lower Aborigines whom they had con-

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quered. These false, disgusting, and degrading religious beliefs and practices were incorporated more or less in the Aryan worship, the evil effects of which are felt to this day in the spiritual state of India. It was a fall from a religion of love and trust to a religion of fear and hate. On the part of the native races it was a case of arrested development. Only now after a period of 2500 years' stagnation has the deep slumber of centuries begun to be disturbed by the arrival of their kinsmen, who have brought the light of a better era to chase away the darkness of ignorance, superstition, and cruelty, to finish the good work their kinsmen tried to complete, but in which they were defeated, and lift India to its own level in everything that is excellent, inspiring, and beneficent. Well may the Hindus now arise and transmute their revered forefathers' religion into the higher and nobler faith, incorporating all that is of beauty and worth in the past systems into the universal faith of Beauty, which sums up every perfection in God and in the ideals of man.

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Many useful lessons may be drawn from the Rig Veda, showing the excellences of the Aryans' national, social, and family life, and also the high-water marks of their religious and philosophical conceptions.

1. In their *national* life, it was a race that loved freedom, activity, and delighted in progress. Constant struggles with nature's stern forces had called forth their manly strength, courage, endurance, and skill. In short, in the fierce war for existence, their strenuous life had developed the highest manhood, bodily and mental, moral and spiritual. The robust spirit of such a people rebelled against all despotism, whether by rulers or by priests. Their national life was therefore a sort of commonwealth, based upon the primitive life they had led for ages in the far north, and later on on the steppes and highlands of Asia. Their families had gradually been formed into clans and these into tribes, among whom friendly coalitions were formed in times of common danger. Already when they entered India they seem to have had a recognised

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organisation of law, order, and government. In this way was engrained in their character a profound deference for the decision of their venerable elders of the clans. This is still common among the Hindus in their village system of rule to this day. In Aryan times, no chieftain had an absolute power, but everywhere all rule was regulated or willed by the voices of the freemen. Their power was felt in the assemblies of the commonwealth of all the tribes. It was thus a rule of a democracy based upon public spirit, natural ability, and moral worth.

Among all forms of rule "class" government has been found by bitter experience to be the worst, whether it is by Warriors or Theocracy, by Priests, by a system of Oligarchy, Plutocracy, Aristocracy, or Democracy. For the welfare of the commonwealth, the harmonious *co-operation* of *all* classes is found to be not only desirable, but indispensable. In modern States, this truth is being acted upon more and more, and hence despotic rule, whether in Church or State, is on the wane. Well would

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it have been for India if the policy of the early Aryans had been adhered to and carried out in the administration of the conquered States as soon as the Aborigines had been educated to take their place among the nation's freemen.

2. The foundation-stone of the State is formed by the *family*, and here, as in their early national life, the Religion of Beauty finds much to admire and to imitate, for it is through the family that life's problems have to be chiefly solved. The Vedic sacred singers knew no more tender relation than that between the husband and his loving wife, who is praised as the talisman of the house, the darling of the home, and the best blessing given with it. A true couple was described as a united pair with one heart and one mind, free from all discord. Indeed, marriage among them was looked upon as having a celestial origin instituted for the mutual support of man and wife and for the increase of their race. It was looked upon as a religious duty, by which their own earthly existence might be prolonged

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and blessed for evermore in their children. It was regarded as a tender relation, joyous, and with mutual free service born of love and attachment. It has been found in all ages that it is only in such a society that true womanliness and robust manliness with high morality can flourish and prevail. The progress of a race is correctly measured by the sanctity of its family life, because for one thing, marriage involves vital consequences to the society, to the State, and even to others yet unborn. The early Aryans early realised that marriage was a sacred bond which sanctified childhood, ennobled motherhood, dignified manhood, and purified every social condition. It would have been well if the monogamy of the early Aryans had been strictly enforced by their descendants in after ages. But polygamy was the fashion and rule among the rich and noble Dravidians, and continued so in spite of the exertions of the Brahmans. Naturally it brought in its train dissolute manners, a debased offspring, with strife and unhappiness in the family circles, and introduced intrigues

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into the Royal Courts, where rebellion and murders were often the consequences of polygamy, with the overthrow of dynasties and prolonged warfare among ambitious claimants for the thrones.

The abolition of these ancient degrading customs would go a long way to overthrow the barriers which have held the Hindus in chains so long. Hindu reformers must abolish these hindrances to a higher and freer life of the human brotherhood in order to bring the reformed faith to the loftier standard required by the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty, which is the perfection and realisation of the early Aryans' noble faith.

One of the outstanding features of this remarkable people whom we call the ancient Aryans was, as pointed out before, that they were a deeply religious people. They realised their dependence upon higher powers, and sought every blessing from them in a simple childlike faith, without the intervention of a hereditary priesthood. They

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had a keen perception of the duty and inestimable advantage of piety, and for the times in which they lived they practised a high morality as the evidence of their faith.

Their religion was one of joy—a sharp contrast, therefore, to the long weary ages which succeeded, when abject fear and terrors of the Gods, who were worshipped only through priests, with an intricate and pompous ceremonial worship, had got the mastery by their imbibing the gloomy faith and degrading practices of the nations they had conquered and among whom their lot had been cast. These ancient Aryans realised early in their career, while still dwelling in their highland homes, that there was a near and dear relationship and communion with heaven for the trusting and devoted souls. Their worship was therefore an occasion for joyful social gatherings.

Now the transformed Religion of the Hindus gladly takes the same view, for only as the Divine is seen from this elevated point of view will religion occupy its right

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place in the Church and in the world. As there ought to be pleasure and admiration in seeing beauty, order, excellency, and perfection around us in every part of Nature's domain, so we ought also to be filled with delight and joy in our Religion by realising that we live under the benign reign of a Being of almighty, unselfish love, who desires to live in our hearts and thereby bless us by ingrafting his beautiful character in our souls. It is to this lofty conception that the modern Hindu reformers ought to raise their countrymen. So shall they be followers indeed of the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty in which the ancient Aryans' faith culminates.

Before leaving the Rig Veda, we must consider for a little the philosophical thoughts which we find interspersed in their hymns. Of these the best known is the hymn of creation which is found in Mandala x., No. 129. Although it is classified among the hymns, it seems rather to be the fragment of a philosophical discussion between

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an eminent Rishni and his hearers. After having opened the discussion and described the creation of the world in eloquent terms, he invites his audience in eastern fashion to discuss with him the difficulties which surrounded this deep subject. From this point of view the fragment consists of three parts, and describes:—

1. The state of existence before the creation of the world.

2. The cause which leads to its creation, and in which utterance is given to a profound conception.

3. Difficult questions proposed for discussion.

FIRST PART

In the beginning there was neither Non-Being nor Being,
No realm of air, nor sky beyond,
What then enshrouded all things?
Where were they?
What gave them shelter?
Was the ocean there,
The unfathomable depths of water?
Death was not there, nor ought immortal,
No sign was there, the days and night divider,
One Being only, the Existent one,

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Breathed calmly, all containing,
Nought else than him was there,
Nought else, above, beyond.
Deep gloom was there, all concealed in darkness,
Shrouded in nothingness, the One lay void,
A Chaos, formless, indiscriminate.

Second Part

The One, the Unit, the primal germ,
His self developed force of inner fervour,
Produced the desire for love (Kâma),
Hence seed and germs of Spirit.
Profound Sages discovered the link
Of Non-Being and Being as being Love.
In this consists the kinship
Connecting Entity with Nullity.
Love, the ray that kindles dormant life,
What is higher than love, what is deeper?
Germ carriers were produced, mighty forces,
Fecund actions below, vast energies above.

Third Part

Who verily knows, and who can here declare it,
Whence it was born and whence comes this creation,
If gods are later than this world's production,
Who knows then whence it first came into being?

He the first origin of this creation,
Whether he formed it all, or did not form it,
Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven,
He verily knows it, or haply knows it not.

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The answers to these difficult questions which the author put to his audience are not recorded here. Subsequent generations of later Rishis attempted the task, as seen in the Upanishads, the Puranas, and Tantaras, but all to little purpose, because the questions are unanswerable by human reason.

Another hymn in Mandala x., No. 121, is called "Ka"—Who? (*i.e.* Who is the unknown God), because the interrogative pronoun occurs in the refrain of each verse of the hymn. Let me quote a few verses:—

Giver of vital breath, of power and vigour,
He whose behests all the gods acknowledge.

By him the heavens are strong,
The earth is steadfast,
By him lights, realm, and sky vault are supported,
By him the regions in mid-air were measured.

Never may he harm us,
Who is earth's begetter,
Nor he whose laws are sure,
The Heavens' Creator,
He who brought forth
The great and lucid waters.

What god shall we adore with our oblation?

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Prajapati (Lord of Life), thou only comprehendest
All these created things, and none beside thee.

Grant us our hearts' desire when we invoke thee,
May we have stores of riches in possession.

This hymn is considered a strong argument for those who maintain that the earlier faith of the Hindus was properly a monotheistic one, until in after ages, by their intercourse with the subjected tribes, the Aryans drifted gradually into their polytheism.

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The Sacred Scriptures

SOMA VEDA

THE second sacred book, called the Soma Veda, is closely connected with the Rig Veda, of which it is practically a recast. It is metrical throughout, consisting of 1549 stanzas in two collections of verses, only 75 of which have not been traced to the Rig Veda. The chants of which it consists are arranged solely with reference to the Soma (Drink) sacrifice in the ritual, and these chants are chiefly drawn from the 8th and 9th book of the Rig Veda, which has 114 hymns in praise of Soma. Many of the invocations are also addressed to the God Soma, for the drink was itself deified, just as fire was deified. Soma was thus the name of one of the Vedic Gods who was invoked as were Agni and Indra.

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The priests who chanted the Soma Veda were accompanied by instrumental music. Among the Aryans there were lute players, drummers, flute players and conch blowers, &c. This ritual was very ancient, and goes back to the Indo-Iranian age. The priests were called Udgatris (*i.e.* Chanters). The tunes they employed were collected in a Gana or song-book. There were numerous and elaborate rules for the music and intonation, the gods being thought to be critical in these matters. Therefore everything as regards "sound" in sacred service had to conform to the rhythm of harmony and melody to please the Gods on High. The whole of the Soma Veda set to music was subsequently rearranged under a distinct compilation called Archika.

The perusal of the 460 Soma hymns which seem to be a collection from four different works leaves a certain sense of disappointment. There is very little elevation in the sentiments and aspirations to be found in these outpourings of the ancient poets. Yet,

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though the ancient worshippers could not have derived much spiritual edification from them, the worshippers found plenty of sentiment in the hymns to produce conviviality and gratify the senses. As a study in the ancient heroes' daily life and religious worship these Soma hymns will always remain of a historical and social value.

The celebrated plant Soma, from which the powerful, intoxicating so-called celestial drink was made, is described as a creeping plant with a small white fragrant flower which yielded a yellow juice. It was often by poets compared to the moon, probably on account of this.

Most of the ancient nations at an early date of their history had learned the art of fermentation. Among the Iranians and Aryans, while on the tableland of Asia, the Soma or Havoma plant, which was reported to grow best on Mount Mujavat, had got into most repute, owing it seems to its powerful intoxicating qualities when pure, and when mixed, to its exhilarating and invigorating effects.

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The ninth book of Rig Veda consists of incantations sung over the Soma while it was being pressed by the stones, and as it flowed through the woollen strainers into the jars in which at last it was ready to be offered to the Gods on High and the worshippers on earth.

The result of fermentation and its surprising effect on the human system was by these unsophisticated races ascribed to inherent divinities of the plants or spirits indwelling in them. As the Soma plant was by experience found to be the most powerful in its effects, the spirit inherent in it was raised to the rank of a divinity. In a number of hymns ascribed to the Gods on High in the Rig Veda, the God Soma appears as the third in the rank, while Indra, the God of Battles, headed the list, and beautiful, lovable Agni ranked as second. The preparation of the sacred draught from Soma was, owing to its supposed divine origin, looked upon as a sacred ceremony, a holy sacrifice for which were set aside a number of priests, specially

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instructed for the work, and whose instruments for producing fermentation of the plant were likewise considered sacred. The offering of the sacred juice was performed thrice daily: to Agni in the morning, to Indra at midday, and to Bibhus (Artisans of the Gods) in the evening. Besides these daily celebrations the Soma offerings accompanied all public worship or festive gatherings. Being so powerful in its effects when pure, it was generally diluted with water, or milk mixed with barley and clarified butter, and fermented in earthen jars or wooden vats for nine days.

Another intoxicating drink of the early Aryans was called Sura. This was distilled chiefly from the meal of wild paddy and drunk by the common people, while the more valuable and expensive Soma was reserved for the Gods invoked at the sacrifices, to the priests who officiated, and for the heads of the clans or tribes.

The cult of a direct worship of "deified liquor" is obviously analogous to the worship and rites of Bacchus in ancient Greece.

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The advantages claimed for the use of the Soma drink by its devotees, as mentioned in the hymns, are as follows:—

1. Exhilarating influence on the brain and elevation of the spirits.

2. Medicinal properties.

3. Bestowed long life, and was even able to keep off death.

4. Stimulated the voice and induced singing.

5. Awakened bright thoughts and inspired the poets.

6. Gave bodily strength — even produced temporary frenzy: hence it was the favourite beverage used by the mighty Indra, by which he performed famous feats of strength and overthrew his enemies.

7. Soma was called the sorrow-dispelling drink.

8. Bestowed everlasting life upon the worshippers; hence Soma was called Amrita (the immortal draught).

9. Bestowed immortality not only upon men but upon the Gods, who were represented as eager to partake of the divine beverage.

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10. Soma was at last considered the vital sap which vivified the world.

As people under the influence of strong drink are often open-handed and generous, so Soma, the God in the juice, was said to clothe the naked, to be free with his gifts of earthly blessings and heavenly glories. He was addressed as a God in the highest strain of veneration when his cult was most in vogue.

The Soma juice when prepared and offered to the Gods was poured out on the bundles of Kusa grass provided for them in the seats of honour:—

> These dripping Soma juices are offered upon
> The sacred grass. Drink them, Indra, to
> Recruit thy vigour.

The worshippers describe the virtues of the celestial beverage thus:—

> We have drunk the Soma,
> We have become immortal,
> We have entered into light.
> What can the enemy do to us?

The delight which the Gods experience in

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drinking the double-distilled Soma is seen in another hymn :—

Gladden the Gods,
Gladden the host of Maruts,[1]
Make heaven and earth rejoice,
O God Soma.
Indra hath drunk,
Agni hath drunk,
All celestials have drunk their fill (ix. 97, 42).

Of all the Gods, it was thought that Indra, the mighty God of Battles, was the chief lover of the Soma. This God's excess in drinking the intoxicating beverage appears to have been not at all a thing to be ashamed of, but

[1] *Maruts.* These were the thrice seven storm gods, the constant associates of Indra in all his warlike exploits. They were described as a troop of youthful warriors armed with battle-axes, decked with gold ornaments and riding in golden cars which gleam with lightning. They were said to be fierce and terrible like lions, glorying in fighting, and, like their master, fond of quaffing Soma. As they struggled on behalf of the Aryans against the Aborigines, so in another aspect they were benevolent powers, for in the times of drought by Indra's orders they brought rain upon the thirsty ground, and thus became a blessing to mankind for which they were honoured in their songs.

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rather admired by the Aryans as a convincing proof of his enormous capacity for heavy drinking. Thus one reads in viii. 66, 4:—

> Then Indra at a single draught drank the
> Contents of thirty pails, that were filled with
> Soma juice. His belly, drinking deepest
> Draughts of Soma, swells like the Ocean.

No doubt it was thought a splendid thing that Indra could set such an example, as voiced by their bards, and stimulated the robust warriors who thronged to do him honour to try and imitate his example.

The Soma worship became one of the most joyful festivals for high and low, as well as at family gatherings where the monotony of daily life and toil was forgotten.

Their favourite Gods, they believed, enjoyed in their tenuous celestial bodies their offerings. They were the guests who honoured mortals by their visits to earth, and to whom therefore special seats of honour were always reserved at the spread table. In those unsophisticated times the Gods walked

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upon earth with men, and men with God. They were dear to them as dearest friends, as trusty protectors against all ills of life, co-workers with men in their hearts and in their homes, to make life more beautiful, to make the unseen world more familiar, and a place worth living for, where the dear companionship with the unseen celestials begun on earth would be consummated in a union of never-ending fellowship in Heaven, based upon love and admiration on their part, on love and condescension on the part of the Gods. As one takes a last lingering look at these scenes of bygone ages, one seems to see the stately procession of Aryan Rishis in their flowing garments, followed by the aged chieftains and warriors; then the choir of the tribe's male singers; and lastly, the chorus of lovely girls in the bloom of their early life, all moving reverently and with stately steps, accompanied with solemn music, around the consecrated stone altars, hung with festoons and banners, where from the midst of the one altar sweet incense

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circles slowly towards the sky, while from the fire altars black clouds arise during the time the sacrifice is being prepared for the feast. Hymns are being sung all the time, and some of the very hymns which have come down to our time, afterwards collected in their Soma prayer-book, were probably in use a thousand years before the Christian era. Thus in Rig Veda, Mandala v., Hymn 26, you read the invocation hymn to the beloved God Agni, offered up by the officiating Rishi on such an auspicious occasion before the sacrifice was partaken of by the people. You will observe that the prayer is addressed to the trusted Agni as the one who, on their behalf, invited the other Gods to the feast:—

1. O Agni, holy and divine,
   By thy splendour and thy persuasive tongue,
   Bring hither the Gods so that we may adore them.

2. We pray thee, thou who droppest oil (gives prosperity),
   Bright-rayed, thou lookest as the Sun,
   Bring the Gods hither to the feast.

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3. We have kindled to thee, O Sage (the fire is burning on the Altar),
Bright caller of the Gods to the feast,
O Agni, great in sacrifice.

4. O Agni, come with all the Gods,
Come to our sacrificial offering,
We choose thee as the priest of invocation.

5. Give, Agni, to the worshipper
Who pours out the juice (Soma),
Give him the strength of a hero,
Come, sit with the gods upon the grass (Kusa).

6. Victor of thousands, Agni, thou,
Kindler of the sacrifice, cherisher of the laws,
Worthy of praise, Envoy of the Gods.

7. Duly proceed with our sacrifice,
Comprising all the Gods to-day,
Strew holy (Kusa) grass to be their seats.

8. So may the Maruts sit thereon,
The Asvins, Mitra, Varuna,
The Gods with all their Company.

Let us proceed. After the sacrificial service, the sacred meal follows in the open air, where all sit down together around the special seats of honour reserved for their Gods on High, who for this festive occasion have come down upon earth to share in

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their worshippers' joys, give them their blesssings, and drink the Soma juice which is poured out before their seats in copious measures. When the meal is over, all rise refreshed and strengthened to spend the rest of the day with innocent amusements to be witnessed by their assembled Gods and done in their honour. The strong athletic young men of the tribes engage in games, wrestling matches, races, taming wild horses, mimic fighting and other sports, and then towards evening the time is spent with music, singing and dancing of the young people, while the old men enjoy their dice, and the ancient dames are absorbed in family gossip. At last the sun has sunk in the west, announced by the watchmen's shrill blasts of horns, and all retire, seeking rest, delighted with the cheerful, exhilarating Soma worship, and wishful of a speedy return of another similar joyful day.

The early tribes of the Aryans were full of illusions on many things, as young people are. The extreme admiration paid to Soma,

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the God of Intoxication, instead of being Heaven's special gift to men and a blessing to humanity, turned out in the long run to be a dire curse, a grave social danger, not only to the individual, but to the family, to society, and to the nations at large. The worship of intoxicating drink naturally led gradually to excessive drinking customs both by priests and people. Happily when things were at their worst the Reformer Buddha appeared, about 600 years B.C. His mission was not only to check the tyranny, superstition, immorality, and worldliness of the sacerdotal Dravidians, the aboriginal classes, and the people at large, but also to put a stop to the debasing drinking habits of intoxicants so prevalent among high and low, priests and people. In this he greatly succeeded. Since his time, abstinence from strong drink became a "religious" injunction and was generally observed in India, and it has remained so to our own time.

By the subsequent invasion of the Mohammedan power, a great part of India fell

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under its sway, and as all the followers of the prophet had to be strict abstainers from all strong or intoxicating drinks, a further good example was shown to the Hindu worshippers to keep them also on the safe path of sobriety, and thus show to the world at large that the Hindu religion in no whit stood behind the religion of Islam on the drink question. It will be a blot upon the name of the British Aryans in India, if for the sake of raising more revenue, or for other reasons, they encourage directly or indirectly drinking habits among the Hindus, which in such an excessively tropical climate will spell ruin both to body and soul of the natives, who in this habit are certainly a pattern to their kinsmen, the British Aryans, among whom the vice of intoxicating drink is still so prevalent.

The followers of the Religion of Beauty look upon the question in the following way: "There are social problems enough to be solved to employ all the energy of earnest men who try to make life better. Amongst

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these are education, and the minimising of pauperism, vice, disease, and crime. The curse of drunkenness brings pauperism and its attendant evils and miseries; therefore the drink which causes intemperance is the foe of a God of love and beauty."

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The Sacred Scriptures

YAJUR VEDA

The third sacred book of the Veda introduces the student to quite different times and localities. The centre of Veda civilisation is shifted from the Punjab of the north to southern and eastern India, beyond the Vindhya mountain ranges.

During these many centuries a large part of India, both north and south, had been conquered by the Aryans, and upon the ruins of the old civilisation large military states had arisen under their direct control, or subject to tributes paid to them by the various non-Aryan princes. Everywhere, however, the government remained despotic as it had been ages before the Aryan invaders appeared on the scene. The Aryans soon

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found out to their cost that the conquered natives were unfit for self-government, and the bulk of the population remained as before, little better than slaves under the current name of Sudras. In this way the democratic Aryans, by force of circumstances, found themselves obliged to act as absolute or despotic rulers in the interest of the State, just as their predecessors had done whom they had partly supplanted.

A great change also had come over their religious conceptions bequeathed to them by their revered fathers. The simple faith of the early Aryans, where every man had a direct access to the Gods on High, which had made them what they were, little by little got pushed into the background as being only applicable to Ascetics. They realised that the old ecclesiastical and despotic system of the Dravidians must be adhered to, to enable them to keep hold of and influence for good the ignorant and treacherous masses of natives. The Dravidians had been for ages recognised by the Aborigines as the divinely

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appointed medium to stand between the worshippers and the Gods on High. This conception subsequently came to be extended to the Brahmans, among whom the poet priests had come to be considered, when inspired to compose the sacred songs, as in direct communication with the divinities who ruled the world. In this way the fatherly despotism both in Church and State in force among the Dravidians became also the settled policy of the conquering Aryans. The Aryan bards and family priests were raised to be spiritual and despotic rulers over India, as the Aryan chieftains had been raised to be the secular despotic rulers.

The profound changes which the Aryan invaders were subjected to by their great successes in India will be understood if we remember that wherever they were victorious they became inheritors at the same time, not only of the land and chattels, but practically also of the whole of the Dravidian civilisation, whether in State, Church, or Society. Unfortunately for them, although these vic-

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tories brought material benefits, they got entangled in the superstitions of the non-Aryans, and gradually these were engrafted on the primitive Aryan faith.

A comparison of the Aryans before and after their conquest of India shows:—

1. Instead of freedom of worship and a commonwealth free from kingly oppression, they were compelled by circumstances and for their own safety's sake to continue the patriarchal despotism in Church and State as being, considering their position, for the highest welfare of all.

2. Instead of political equality as members of the Aryan family, all having equal opportunities to advancement in life and being free from all caste restraints, there was now at work a fully developed caste system inherited from the Dravidians, based upon races, blood, and occupation, with its iron rules of fixed stratas according to birth, which was looked upon as a divine election not to be tampered with, instituted by Heaven for the regulation of society.

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3. Instead of *joy* being the keynote of existence under the charge of benevolent powers to whom the worshippers had direct access, the universe was now believed to be evil to its core, to be in the grasp of millions of wicked spirits. Fear was the keynote of worship, and for their salvation the worshippers relied implicitly on the divinely appointed priesthood.

4. Instead of the Vedic Poet Priests whose office could be filled by any one from the tribes who had the gifts, the tribes being free from priestly aggression, the Aryan priesthood was now invested with supernatural sacredness and confined to one caste, which was looked upon as the only mediator and intercessor who had influence with the unseen powers, the Brahmans being conceived as incarnations of the Highest. Only through them could blessings be received, and only through them could wicked spirits be entreated, their favours secured by gifts, or their evil influences averted by magical rites.

5. Instead of adhering to the early Aryans'

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spiritual worship, which was independent of a sacred caste, the public worship was now based upon elaborate rituals, along with expensive animal and other sacrifices, which only the priesthood were capable of performing. The outward form became the most important, and the religion of the heart was relegated to the Ascetics who had renounced the world. No doubt the Brahmans in all generations have had a succession of noble men, of unblemished lives, full of devotion and self-sacrifice, with spiritual attainments of the highest order, and who had inherited from their ancestors the unshaken faith in the divinely ordered Caste system by which, owing to their birth into the sacred Caste, they were honestly under the belief that they had clearly become by Heaven's appointment God's chosen vessels, His holy representatives upon earth. In many respects to them it was a glorious faith calculated to stir up the soul to noble actions and to live worthy of its high vocation, reflecting God's character by being a blessing to each and all. To many others unfortunately it

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became a temptation to seek unworthy ends by fostering pride, ambition, and rapacity.

The result was that the cheerful optimism of the ancient Aryans had been changed to a dreary pessimism. The world was thought, as the non-Aryans believed, and as later the Aryans believed, to lie in the Evil One; it was considered a misfortune to be born; this life was sorrow from start to finish; the soul subject to endless transmigrations for some eight millions of years; and salvation from life's evils only to be got by unquestioning obedience to the rites and rules of the priesthood, who in this way gradually became the inquisitors of every man's conscience, upon whose will and influence with the Heavenly Powers the present and future existence of every Hindoo was thought to be dependent. All these misconceptions can be traced to *one* source, the departure of the primitive faith of the Aryans by their having lowered their primitive conception of the "character" of God. Upon this *one* conception everything in Church, State, and Society will, however,

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always depend, and upon the true foundation of which the new faith of India must henceforth be built.

The Dravidian worship had gradually been absorbed into the Aryan faith and had quite overshadowed it. Owing to this, the simple fire and elemental cultus were found to be no longer sufficient. A complicated system of ritualistic ceremonies having symbolical significances, and thought necessary to influence the powers on high, had been introduced, and at last when too burdensome to be left entirely to memory, was committed to writing in the old Sanskrit, the sacred Aryan language, only known to the Brahmans. With the elaboration of the sacrificial rites, the lower class of officiating priests called Adhwaryus (*i.e.* Offerers), who built the altars, prepared the sacrificial services, killed the victims, lit the fire on the altar of sacrifice, poured out the libations, and did the manual work, had to spend years in studying the Yajur Veda, so that each priest should know by heart the part he had to play in the

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religious services, with the euphonic rules for reciting in low tones and in a certain key the invocations during the services of preparation, presided over by the higher Brahmans, so that there might be a correct performance of the sacrifices, to the most trivial minutiæ. Without this intimate knowledge no candidate for the priesthood got permission to officiate. It was a settled conviction that the Gods on High had to be approached without the slighest hitch in the service, or no blessings could be looked for.

The Yajur Veda, along with the Rig and Soma Veda, became one of the three canonical collections which were concerned with the sacrificial ceremonials in all their intricacies: in the Rig, with praise and prayer, where the Hotrise priests recited the hymns; with drink offerings in the Soma, where the Udgatri priest chanted the hymns; and with meat offerings in the Yajur, where the Athvaya priests in low tones intonated their incantations and prayers during their manual work. These three Vedas were later called the divine "threefold" knowledge (Trayi vidya).

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Part of the Yajur known of old as "the priests' text-book or manual of sacrifices" is prose; part is poetry. The latter is mantras drawn mostly from the Rig; the former is a full description of all the rituals with its formulas, prayers, &c. The name "Yajur" means "sacrifice."

The priest who conducted the sacrificial service was called Adhvaryuh (Conductor). This ancient work has come down the ages in a twofold form or collection (Samhitas), and contains 1886 shlokas in 40 chapters:—

1. With only the sacrificial formulas, called the "Taittirya" or the Krishna, *i.e.* "black" Yajur, arranged liturgically for use at the offering of sacrifices.

2. With these formulas, intermingled with explanations by later hands, called Vajasneyia or "white" Yajur, apparently owing to its lucid way of explaining difficult passages. The Yajur Veda, as we might expect, has had a great number of Sukhas or schools.

The main teaching found therein gives a

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fair idea of the beliefs and customs of those distant ages:—

1. The Yajur contains verses and formulas to be recited at all sacrifices, not merely at the Soma feasts. The work embraces the whole sacrificial and ceremonial system in its complications, upon the smallest items of which the greatest weight was laid. As an instance of the elaborate nature of their sacrificial systems, after the fusion with the Dravidians, they had two groups of seven special classes, or fourteen systems of sacrifices in all. One of the earliest sacrifices, which dated from the primitive Aryans, was the Agnihotra, or the household fire, still common throughout India. Then there were the Agni-Stoma, or that of fire and Soma; then followed the Sulagava or Ox Sacrifice; after this the Asva Medha or Horse Sacrifice; lastly, the Purusha or Human Sacrifices. These latter three cults were subsequently prohibited. The remaining classes were of lesser importance. Moreover, many of the superstitious notions of the non-Aryans were incorporated into the primitive Aryan

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faith. Thus the non-Aryans had, besides what they learned from the Aryans, their own demon or devil worship; their tutelary (guardian) worship; ancestor worship; also hero worship (in which the Brahmans came to be included). They had also Phallic or sex worship, serpent and snake worship (Naga and Azi). They also worshipped the cow, the bull, and the monkey. In addition to these there were myriads of unseen spirits who had to be appeased: spirits who throng heaven, earth, sea, rivers, wells; who inhabit trees and plants. All these were worshipped, or rather the spirits who presided or resided within them, and to be appeased as occasions arose. Every grove, forest, jungle, and morass had its guardian spirit, and in every village there was a sacred tree which was specially precious. Plants such as the tulasi, pipal, bilva, margosa, kusa, &c., were and still are sacred plants. There are sacred stones which require worship, and even a man's tools. A common worship is still rendered by Hindu women to the so-called Ammans in the south and Matas in the north,

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meaning the "Mothers." There are many hundreds of these female tutelary deities who are thought to prevent the spread of diseases, who protect children, &c. They had also to be protected against departed people who had been evil disposed towards them when alive, and who might still pursue them as wicked spirits: against all such, exorcists had to be employed. All these superstitions may be summed up in animistic, fetish, and sexual cults, and most of them survive to this day in India.

From this catalogue it is seen that the natives fancy that on every hand they are surrounded by unseen powers intent upon doing them harm. Plagues, sickness, famine, disaster of every kind, are attributed to evil spirits, whose object is to impede, injure, and destroy them. The people believe the only way to pacify such unseen evils and powerful forces is to offer sacrifices or gifts of varying kinds, in the hope that these, with the prayers and intercessions of the village priests or exorcists, will remove the anger or ill-will of their

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demoniacal persecutors. In serious cases the demons were believed to thirst for the blood of human beings, and in olden days human sacrifices were common; although now, when they are forbidden by the British Aryans, the evil spirits have to be content in substitution with animal life, such as a goat, a hog, or a cock. These practices are still at work among tribes in the south of India. As many of the demons are looked upon as cowards who fear the magic rites of the exorcists, there are still all over southern India a profession of men called "devil dancers," who, dressed up in fantastic costumes to frighten the demons, are regularly employed for the purpose of driving them out of the victims by frantic dances and howling, accompanied with the sounds of their tom-tom or bow bells. These few illustrations can only give a faint idea of the superstition and ignorance of these people.

Seeing how absolutely necessary the priesthood had become to the common people in their daily living, it can well be apprehended that in the elaborate public religious services

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the priesthood was still even more indispensable. The natives had learned and devoutly believed that every public prayer, praise, or confession from the worshippers had to pass through the medium of the priests to be of any avail, these having also each to be coupled with a particular rite to be performed by the priests. The intricate ceremonial services with the sacrifices, the rituals, the formulas, and the verses specially composed and arranged for every conceivable occasion, at last related not only to the sacrificial system upon earth, but embraced the unseen world as well, over all of which the priesthood was believed to have control for the good of the Hindu worshippers.

At last the sacrificial and ritualistic systems were claimed as the most important parts of religion. It was further claimed that it was only when the priesthood officiated that the Gods on High listened to the sacrifices, prayers, and praises, and accepted them. Not only were living people depending upon the Brahmans by their sacrifices, but the Manes

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(or Ancestors) were also taken under the protection of the priesthood, so that they had to officiate at the invocation both of the living and the dead when offering sacrifices. The priests claimed that by this they were able to lift the Manes to higher degrees of blessedness in the unseen world. Under the ceremony of Shraddha, the priests became and still are the sole channels of communication between the bereaved worshippers on earth, the Manes in their onward journey in the spirit world, and the Gods on High, from whom the priests claimed that they could obtain gifts and blessings to benefit the departed. This ceremony was to be performed not only for the nearest generation passed away, but so far back as three generations, and sometimes even still further distant. The power of the priests' sacrifices was thought to be so great that the prayers not merely influenced the Gods' goodwill towards the worshippers, but even compelled them to do the will of the officiating priests, because the latter held the Gods in their power, as these were regarded as de-

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pendent upon the sacrifices of the priests as were the earthly worshippers. The might and valour of the Gods were thought to be produced by ample sacrifices of food and Soma, upon which the celestials depended, as any ordinary mortal, but they were so particular that they declined to partake of any nourishment unless offered to them upon the altar by the Brahmans. We see, therefore, that the propitiatory sacrificial services came to be considered all important. The energies of the priesthood and people ran almost exclusively in the direction of ritual and sacrificial services, to the exclusion of the cultivation of the higher qualities of life, morals, and character.

The primitive idea of sacrifice was simply to offer a thankoffering to the Gods. To this was added afterwards that by offering to the deities the essence of the best part of the food which the worshippers consumed, the Gods were both gratified and nourished. A further stage was reached when it was thought that by sacrifices favours could be obtained in return by the

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Gods, either by petitions, by cunningness, or by force, and lastly it was held that by austerities and by costly sacrifices with gifts to the officiating priests, who by their punctilious observance of a complicated ritual conducted the services, that superhuman powers could be attained. Thus you may read in the Taittiriya Brahmana that the Gods were at first merely mortal, until they extorted immortality from the Supreme Being by their sacrifices and austerities.

In other directions the priesthood also held sway over the people. It had mystic formulas for obtaining rain, crops, fortune, health, victories, &c., all of which intercessions were naturally in constant demand, and are even yet in many parts of India, the belief being still current that the priesthood manage this successfully, by compulsion should flattery fail, over the Deities to whom these different departments belong. The Hindu priesthood is still in great request in every family, for no sooner is a person born, or even before, than oblations must be offered in fire to the Gods. The

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burning of the body on the funeral pile or simple burial is the last sacrificial act of all, while during the intervening period between birth and death, every step in life is accompanied by religious services. The Brahmans' priesthood, when in the zenith of its power, had divided its duties among "sixteen" different classes of priests. No other country in the world has been so much under the power of sacerdotalism as India. But, although to modern eyes caste may appear and in one sense is anti-national and anti-social, yet, as we saw, originally it originated in religious, social, and still more in racial necessity. This is its vindication and the explanation of its astonishing permanence. Caste was conceived as eternal; something that had its foundation in the Creator; something, therefore, that could never be changed. If a man was born in the Brahman caste it was a divine election which no human law could alter. By guarding the purity of their blood, by not marrying into lower castes, the Brahmans preserved their higher civilisation and proved that they were

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by birth and breeding the ordained priests of intelligence and Heaven's true aristocracy. A Brahman still values the inheritance of his father too much to imperil it lightly. He claims the divine right of the spiritual man to rule, and the consequent necessity of keeping himself unspotted from the world. Indeed, all down the stream of Indian history there have been wise and spiritually-minded men among the Brahmans. They were poets, philosophers, priests, and devotees. As said: "The Brahmans did not, as many think, deliberately adopt caste and surround it with an intricate and elaborate system of defence for their own glory or profit, or that they themselves might lead lives of pleasure at the expense of their fellow-men. No, they were actuated, not by love of ease, but by a high sense of obligation; hence the reverence which they received for centuries and the faithfulness with which they observed the stern theories of duties which the Brahmans worked out. It lasted because it had its roots in the nature of things and not in the selfishness of an individual or a class,

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Their strict personal discipline was intended to prevent them being debased by mixture with the inferior races in whom the lower sensual and brutish nature predominated. This was the aim of the institution and the aim of the code of Manu and other lawgivers, and hence the Brahmans being the ablest, the most cultured, with a high morality and a lofty devotion to their sacred duties, both the social and religious supremacy naturally fell to their share."

As regards sacrifices, with which Yagur is so much occupied, it is well to bear in mind that when the Aryans entered India they were, as we have seen, largely a pastoral people, their flocks and herds affording them a large proportion of their food. Hence they ate beef freely without any religious scruples. Even cows, goats, and fowls were sacrificed to the Gods as well-pleasing to them, and there are still exact instructions left how each part of the sacrifice is to be divided and how much was to be offered to each particular God. Divers imprecations were hurled against those who

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ventured to depart from the regular order of distribution. The ceremony was called "Gouredha." In the early Aryan times, the Gods, the priestly assistants, the warriors and the people all feasted together in one friendly commonwealth. Portions of the flesh were consumed in the fire and portions were eaten. All offerings and libations with hymns were called "Yajna." As explained, the reason of the Gods being offered a share of the food consumed was that they were believed to be composed of ethereal forms, dependent for nourishment on the invisible elementary essence of the substances presented to them, such as the aroma of butter and meat offered by fire (homa), as also the fumes arising from libations of the exhilarating juice of Soma.

After the Aryans had settled in India for several centuries, and during that period imbibed the gloomy notions and bloodthirsty intolerant faith of the natives, they too came to permit the extension of the range of sacrifices dear to some of the lower tribes: so as to include in Aryan worship, for example, horse sacrifices,

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no doubt derived from the Scythian element in India, as in their ancestral home the horse was sacrificed to the Sun god to whom it was dedicated. According to the Brahmans 10 times 18 = 180 domestic animals were on this high occasion to be sacrificed with the horses, and with other wild and tame animals. This rite took place once a year, and was called Ashvamedha, its object being that the tribe should thereby acquire wealth and posterity.

Thus the hymn reads:—

> May this good horse
> Bring us all sustaining riches. Wealth in
> Good kine, strong horses, manly offspring,
> Freedom from sin, may Aditi vouchsafe us.
> May the horse with our oblations gain us lordship.

As the Aryan worship degenerated most of the rites required a larger variety of animals for sacrifices.

Human sacrifices were among the Dravidians, and especially the Aborigines, considered of great value to avert national misfortunes or plagues. Thus in the Paruna:—

"By a human sacrifice attended by the

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proper rules, Devi remained gratified for 1000 years, and by sacrifices of three human beings for 100,000 years."

In southern Indian the goddess Chandika was most celebrated in those distant ages as thirsting for human blood. The sect called Saktas formerly ate portions of the flesh and drank the blood of their victims, which had been sacrificed at their secret orgies. By the primitive races such as the Khonds, the chief idea of religion has been the necessity of appeasing the malice of malignant beings by oblations of blood. The Gods were supposed to send famines or pestilence, unless propitiated by human blood. The first great reaction against human sacrifice, and indeed also against all animal sacrifices, was made by Buddha. As he had laid down the commandment—

Thou shalt not taste any intoxicating drink,

so his other command was thus—

Thou shalt not take any life.

This referred indeed to life of any kind.

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The changes which Buddha introduced were subsequently largely carried out by the powerful influence of King Asoka of Magadha, whose empire extended from Bengal to the borders of Afghanistan. He died 220 B.C. There are rock inscriptions still found in different parts of India which he caused to be engraved as follows:—

> This is the edict of the beloved of the gods,
> The Raja Piyadasi:
> "The putting to death of animals is to be
> entirely discontinued."

The reaction was gradual, but sure. Meantime in the transition stage, animals and men were let loose after being tied as symbols to the sacrificial posts, or effigies were employed in their stead. Within the last 600 years the sacrifices of human beings to Kali and Chandika were replaced by animals, like goats and buffaloes, and now often only with presents of sugar-cane and sweets. Indeed, so much has the doctrine of Buddha been assimilated that the slaying of animals even in sacrifices has become revolting to the bulk of the Hindus. Two

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other reasons have operated in the same direction :—

(1) The worship of animals came to be also included in the Aryan cult. The ancient Aryans worshipped chiefly the phenomena of nature or the heavenly bodies. They did not look upon cows as sacred, but killed and ate them freely. However, to the new cult of animal worship it seemed to be as wicked to eat the Gods whom they worshipped, seeing they were thought to reside in the animals slain, as it would be to eat their own parents.

(2) Another new doctrine appeared from the non-Aryans under the name of Transmigration of Souls, also unknown to the early Aryans, who did not believe for a moment that at death they passed from one animal body to another. However, to the new cult this was a powerful argument against the use of meat, for a man's mother-in-law might become a sheep, and if killed for food he might eat her.

(3) The British Government suppressed the remnant of these sacrifices of human blood in 1845. Since then the blood of various animals

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has been substituted for that of men, and even this has greatly diminished. Animal sacrifices are now rarely seen except at the altars of the bloodthirsty goddess of destruction, Kali, and the tutelary deity Ayenar, and at the devil shrines in the south. Besides the suppression of Samadh (burning alive) the Government has also suppressed self-immolations and self-tortures, killing of female infants, burying alive of lepers and others; also the prevalent Bhrigu, *i.e.* suicide by pilgrims, &c.

After a careful study of the Yajur Veda with an unprejudiced mind, very few, whether Europeans or Hindus, can avoid coming to the conclusion that there are no features about it to justify the claim of a divine origin, or divine inspiration, indeed little to claim our respect or admiration. On the contrary, the whole of the religious system, as worked out in practice and advocated therein, must be objectionable to all modern civilised people. Yet, as we look deeper and try beneath the outward and corrupt to discover the divine principle which has been its mainspring or the precious gem

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amid all the dross and rubbish, the seeker after truth will not be disappointed. In the Rig Veda we find underlying the whole book an optimistic and devout spirit which finds its life and joy in outpourings of the heart, in loving service, in brave struggles, in fearless trust, in a strong belief in a kindred unseen supreme spirit in whose hands men are, and who would do all for them and theirs in the world at large: all is for the best.

As expressed by a modern poet:—

> God's in His Heaven,
> All's right with the world.

2. In the Soma Veda, the Religion of Beauty finds the divine principle in the ancient worshippers' sense of nearness to and comradeship with the unseen Beings upon whom they depend. It was a dear, near and direct communion, souls responding to souls, heart answering to heart, Love bringing God into the soul, and the soul thereby lifted up to enjoy the Beloved for evermore. This love, this communion, this near and

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dear fellowship with God is still man's highest privilege, and indeed the only way for the soul of man to gain the victory over the world.

3. In the Yajur Veda, amidst all its dreary formalism, unblushing claims, and what we would call spiritual despotism, the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty finds yet one precious jewel which in its beauty and priceless value makes one forget everything mean and despicable in which it is buried. This is the principle of "Sacrifice" which also reigns in every part of nature and human society. Grossly as this principle has been misunderstood and caricatured, yet, the giving of self for love's sake and in love's service will ever be the soul's highest privilege and the only road to supreme happiness, much more by what it gives than by what it receives, for true sacrifice of the heart arises from gratitude and love. May the thoughtful Hindus of our days who wish to evolve the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty from their ancient systems, incorpo-

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rate this underlying glorious principle of a loving heart's sacrifice in their new cult. So shall arise a new transformed Hinduism, purified from ancient errors and misconceptions.

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The Sacred Scriptures

ATHARVA VEDA

This is the fourth Veda, and considered much later than the Rig Veda. It was chiefly drawn from the native sources, and afterwards added to the Vedas when the various faiths were being to some extent unified under Hinduism; but only after strong opposition by the party which belonged to the old Aryans' faith and wished to keep that latter uncorrupted.[1]

If the Yajur Veda referred chiefly to "sacrificial" rites, the Athar Veda is chiefly occupied with "magical" rites. It is this which gives it so much interest to the modern reader. Not merely specimens of

[1] Manu, in the eleventh book, verse 264, declares that the Veda is only threefold.

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the early Aryans' superstitions are gathered together, but by far the larger part has come from the still earlier Dravidians', Turanians', and Aboriginals' magical beliefs and practices from antiquity.

As was the case with a large part of the "sacrificial" rites belonging to the original inhabitants, so in the case of their "magical" rites, these too were practised along with the Aryans' purer faith, thus introducing a very large amount of superstitious notions which did not exist before among the Aryans. When despotic power rested with the Dravidian priesthood, they kept their own as well as the natives' magical formulas, incantations, and imprecations, which they had got into their possession as great secrets, not to be divulged on any consideration to outsiders, for these formulas and rites were mines of exhaustless wealth and power to them and have continued so to this day. For this reason, for many centuries, their secret knowledge of spells, witchcraft, astrology, and black magic were learned by heart, and took

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a long time to acquire. Nobody outside the charmed circle of the sacred order of priests knew them or could practise them.

Apparently this is one of the reasons why so long a time elapsed before it was thought prudent and safe to have the secret knowledge reduced to writing, and only when the material accumulated so much that it became difficult to know the whole by heart. There were at first only thirteen collections, but afterwards, with the accumulation of materials, these were increased to twenty Kandas. They contain 731 hymns of about 6000 stanzas. The last two of the Kandas are manifestly of much later date. Of these 6000 stanzas about one-fifth are derived from the Rig. Only about one-sixth of the work is in prose In sacred service the "metres" were generally employed as of more influence with the unseen powers than simple prose. It contains a multitude of incantations and also abounds in spells.

The original name of this so-called sacred collection was a compound, formed of the names of two ancient celebrated priestly

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families who were considered most proficient in these mystic rites.

1. *The Atharvans.* This portion is thought to be chiefly composed of charms and devoted to auspicious events.

2. *The Angirases* portion was thought to consist more of aid formulas, spells and curses, witchcraft, &c.

For this reason the early name of the collection was Atharvangirasah.

Another ancient priestly family, of the name of Bhrigus (belonging to the fire priests), had also inherited a series of magic and other valuable formulas and prescriptions. These were likewise, in course of time, added to the collection. For this reason the work sometimes went under the name of Bhrigus, or more often, coupled with the second collection, was called "Bhrigu Angirasah."

In the ritual text there is still another name, namely, "Brahma Veda," probably because it became in course of time an important and valuable Veda for the Brahmans to consult, seeing they had to use these charms so largely

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in their daily practice, and have steadily gained therefrom large revenues. They still carry on a brisk trade in this kind of work, as the natives continue to believe in them, and the Brahmans themselves seem to be as confident in their efficiency as are the Ryots.

In India there were seven forms of Magic:—

1. The Magic of Incantations.
2. „ Sacrifice.
3. „ Asceticism.
4. „ Priests.
5. „ Mysticism.
6. „ Germination.
7. „ Ceremonies.

The belief was that the magic of the sacrifice was greater than the Gods, for the Gods were thought to depend upon the sacrifice, and the sacrifice depends upon the priest. The Magic of Asceticism was afterwards considered still more potent than the magic of the priest.

When these sacred and secret charms were committed to writing, the language used was, as in the case of the sacrificial systems, the

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ancient Sanskrit, which only the Brahmans knew, it being by that time a dead language to all except the Brahmans. The common dialect was then the Prakriti. In the Sanskrit language they naturally thought that their secret knowledge would be safely kept through all time coming. The Brahmans at the height of their power threatened death and destruction to any one, outside the Brahman or warrior caste, who without their permission learned the sacred language, leave alone any one who dared to learn the contents of the four sacred Vedas. The secret was certainly well kept in the sacred caste until the kinsmen of the Brahmans, the British Aryans, appeared on the scene some two thousand years later. By-and-by they managed to get possession of copies of these sacred and highly prized documents. They were subsequently translated, and now the whole modern world can read for itself the innermost secrets of the Brahman priesthood in their character as soothsayers, astrologers, and sorcerers, and realise the superstitious ideas, practices, and

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beliefs of a nation's early childhood, which yet continue to hold sway over a couple of hundred millions of human beings who are still kept in swaddling clothes by the Hindu priesthood.

In reading these old collections there is revealed to one what were the popular ideas on these subjects in bygone ages, and, strange to say, these have descended almost in unbroken force to our own day, most of the contents being more or less believed in and practised among the present generation of natives. It can be realised from these collections, and the hold they have on high and low in India, that priests and people alike have sunk in the mire of superstition and idolatry, and are still under the spell of the natives' debased faith, from which they are plainly unable or unwilling to extricate themselves. It is just here that their kinsmen are able effectually to come to their aid, by bringing modern civilisation and science with their searching light to drive away these black clouds of ignorance which envelop them, and may do so for many

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centuries unless they are rescued by the British Aryans. Only by thoroughly educating the natives, down to the lowest strata, in modern thought will light penetrate the thick darkness of ignorance, idolatry, and superstition, and bring the millions of natives to throw off their fears and slavish worship, with all their dire results upon individual and society. In the ignorance of the masses and the divine authority claimed by the Brahman, lie the enormous influence of the Hindu priesthood. It would be against human nature to expect them in the position they still hold, and the beliefs to which they sincerely cling, to do anything themselves to change their beliefs handed down to them from unnumbered generations. Moreover, the caste system also operates in the same direction. The Brahmans themselves are convinced, and have been so for ages, of their divine origin, and that to them only is given the key to light and learning, to life and death. It is therefore not so much a matter of intentional deception practised upon the stupid natives, as it is, that the

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Brahmans have got it ingrained in them, from their birth, that they are superior to all others, being the offspring of the Divine, and that their duty is to shut their eyes and close their ears against all opposite arguments of the infidels. In their present state of unwillingness to consider anything different from their ancient teaching, of which they are the custodians, and of which they are proud, it is almost useless to try for their conversion. They still cling to their fathers' creed and all that that involves. In spite of the intelligence and many admirable characteristics and refinements of the modern Brahmans, it is more than likely that many of the lower castes will avail themselves of the British Aryans' education and enlightenment, and thus throw off superstition in all its forms much sooner than the priestly class.

In the meantime, in every part of India the natives live in a constant state of fear through believing that unseen agencies surround them to do them bodily, mental, or spiritual harm, bringing illness or bad luck to themselves,

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their families, or the whole village. They are afraid of ghosts, for in their eyes all forests, caverns and ruins, or empty houses, even the rustling of leaves, are places or occasions where evil spirits are at work. All these evil powers or unseen dangers require the village priest or exorciser to drive them away. The beliefs are current that disembodied spirits visit the earth; that there are revengeful and spiteful ghosts. Nearly every one of the natives wears amulets and talismen for protection against them and also against the "evil eye." Witches are much feared, and are thought to kill children, raise illicit love, &c. To overcome all these evils, the natives fall back upon the Brahmans, who alone they think can save them. These order gifts, utter spells, offer expiation, direct penances, rites, charms, fastings and pilgrimages. They are also the interpreters of dreams, soothsayers, augurs and astrologers, who cast the horoscope on all occasions. Every form of superstition is a source of gain to the Brahmans. Hence they desire to perpetuate what they themselves

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perhaps may believe to be the truth, and in any case pays them well to countenance and to practise.

To return to the Athar. The salient teaching of the secret formulas were mystic rites and imprecations againt diseases, noxious animals, demons, wizards, dangerous foes, and bodily and mental ailments. This book is sometimes called the "cursing Veda," because it contains so many Mantras (or prayers) supposed to be able to cause the destruction of enemies. As the Atharvan priest was believed capable of rendering great services in the injury and overthrow of enemies by sorcery, magic, and imprecations, the royal Chaplain (or Puruhita) was generally chosen from these, and followed the army on their marches. In Atharva Veda, Book III., Hymn 19, you read how a Puruhita magnifies his office:—

I fortify the Kingdom of Princes,
I augment their energy, valour, and force,
I break the arms of their enemies with this oblation.

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May all those who fight against our
Wise and prosperous prince, sink downward
And be prostrated.
With my prayer I destroy his enemies,
And raise up his friends,
I strengthen their weapons,
I prosper their kingdom rich in heroes,
May their power be undecaying and victorious,
May all the Gods foster their designs,
Go, conquer, ye warriors.
May your arms be impetuous,
When discharged, fly forth, O arrow,
Sped by prayer, vanquish the foes,
Assail, slay all the choicest of them,
Let not one escape.

The sorcerers were called "Yatuvidah." Even in the earliest times of the Aryan tribes, sorcerers were to some extent bound up with domestic, social, and tribe practices; but these were nothing compared to the practices and superstitions of the Aborigines, which came to be admitted into the Vedic worship. A large number of imprecations are directed against demons and enemies. There are also hymns containing charms for banishing evil dreams and nightmares, which were thought to be caused by demons sitting on the chest

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of the sleeper and trying to throttle him. There were also spells intended to strike terrors into the heart of an enemy with whom they were in combat. Thus one of them reads as follows:—

> Arise and arm, ye spectral forms
> Enveloped in fire and flames,
> Ye serpents, spirits of the deep,
> Demons of night, pursue the foe,
> Pursue the foe (xi. 10).

Victory in battle was often ascribed to the virtue of some of their sacred hymns. They were generally considered unfailing spells, and no enterprise was entered upon without their sacred songs, which they firmly believed had magical effects to help them to prosper and guide them in all their dangers and difficulties. In the course of their invasions, their most gifted Seers composed new hymns, which were added to the rest, and which also were thought to be inspired, bringing unfailing helps and acceptable offerings to special divinities. The Vedas are full of prayers and imprecations to arrest and repel the

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molestation of evil spirits which they thought crowded about the sacrifices presented by the faithful in order to impede their consummation and efficiency.

It will be impossible here to give more than a few specimens from these old collections, taken at random. Thus against a "cough" you have the following spell, expressed in graceful language and in a poetic form. Here is one verse:—

> Just as the arrow, sharpened well,
> Swift to a distance flies away,
> So even thou, O cough, fly forth,
> Upon the broad expanse of earth
> Fly forth.

In case of such spells the priest did not confine himself alone to them, but gave the patient at the same time a dose of medicine to help the spell, for the priests and sorcerers were also doctors, skilled in using herbs. If the herbs did not cure, the spells might; and if both failed, some evil spirit not yet propitiated was blamed, and new spells were tried.

It is amusing to read how the Brahmans

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knew in which way to frighten and bring to their senses those daring persons who had incurred their displeasure. There is a specimen in vi. 19, 14. When one considers how horrible the idea was to an orthodox Hindu of touching or tasting contaminated or soiled drink or food, especially anything connected with a corpse, one can realise something of the punishment conveyed by the following imprecation:—

> Water with which they bathe the dead,
> Water with which they wet his beard,
> The Gods assign thee as thy share,
> Oppressor of the Brahman priest.

Here is a short imprecation against evil spirits (Mandala vii. 104):—

> Burn, destroy the demon foes,
> Slay them—chase them away from us—
> Let them boil like a cauldron
> Set amidst the flames of fire.

Here is a verse from a prayer for a sick person showing how the priest in course of time came to be looked upon as being able

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by his sanctity or magical powers to sway the divinities to obey him:—

> Let this man remain here, O Gods,
> Let him not depart hence to the other world,
> We rescue him from death
> By our charms, with boundless efficiency.

As has been said, "The Mantras (prayers) are now the tool of superstition to wring from the unwilling hands of the Gods their favour, or by simply using magical powers, force them to obey the sorcerers' wishes."

One peculiarity we find in these collections, also in Yajur Veda, showing the swift degeneracy of the earlier faith. Whereas in the early Vedic ages, the Gods were approached with a frank confidence and familiarity as if they were admired and loved by the worshippers, and yet treated with a reverential awe, and while the demons (Rahshas) were objects of detestation and horror, whose attacks the Gods were asked to ward off, the later collection in Atharva and Yajur show quite a different kind of conception, namely, a religion of abject fear which

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began to predominate if it had not entirely driven out the older conceptions. This religion of fear was the outstanding feature of the religious thoughts of the Aborigines and Dravidians, and proves how it had invaded and supplanted the early Vedic faith. The divinities are no longer looked upon with a childlike confidence, but are regarded with a cringing fear; are conceived as powers whose wrath is to be deprecated and favours besought in order to induce them by fair means or foul to abstain from doing harm.

The two later Vedas form a link and an explanation of the idolatries and superstitions which have been at work among the masses for several thousand years. In the Rig Veda the sacrifices were only a means of influencing the will of the Gods in favour of the offerer, while in the two later Vedas the priest power had by that time grown so great that it was thought to be able to force the Gods, even against their will, to grant them their request. The priests gloried in being able to outwit and cheat the evil powers in the interest of

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those who employed them, to the delight and satisfaction of the deluded worshippers, who willingly paid extra fees if the priest succeeded.

These venerable tomes may be classified as follows:—

1. Divination.
2. Charms and amulets.
3. Spells, curses, omens, and the evil eye.
4. Exorcism, sorcery, and imprecations.
5. Expiatory rites, austerities, tortures, &c.
6. Charms to procure health, wealth, and happiness.
7. Charms against demons, witches, &c.
8. Rites of magic, witchcraft, demon worship, &c.
9. Astrology, casting the horoscope, &c.

To sum up what has been said:—

1. Brahm, or the Creator, is practically unknown to common Hindus. In any case he is considered a Being far away, who does not know them, much less cares for them, so they leave him severely alone, and if there are

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any benevolent spirits they spend neither time nor money upon them, as they do not fear them, for these do them no harm.

2. They believe that the war between evil and good, in this present world at least, has gone in favour of evil powers. As the Apostle John has it—"For we know that the world lieth in the wicked one;" or, as a Hindu poet expresses it:—

> How many births are past, I cannot tell,
> How many yet to come, no man can say,
> But this alone I know, and know full well,
> That pain and grief embitter all the way.

3. Seeing the world "lieth in the wicked one," and that wicked spirits surround their every footstep in life, how can the Hindus escape from harm and sufferings?

4. Their religious books, their priests, their wise men, all unitedly give one answer. There are only two ways of escape, and they go together. The one is to employ the Exorcists, who can expel by flattery, by conjurations, by prayers, by adjurations, by threats or by imprecation, the influence or presence of the

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malignant demons. The natives have the fullest confidence in the powers of these exorcists or holy men to wrestle with the demons and all their brood, and employ magic powers against them; in short, in their supernatural skill and the success attending them. The other way is to try and curry favour with the demons, chiefly through the priests, by offering flattery and prayers, or where these are unavailing, by offering valuable gifts, starting pilgrimages, practising austerities, which may induce them to depart for a season.

5. Another oppressive fear among the natives is the evil influence of the planets. Hence astrologers are employed on every occasion to find the lucky days upon which to enter upon any enterprise. This is an almost universal custom in India. The "evil eye" or "Nazar" (mischief glance) is also another sort of fear, and "omens" are of great importance to them, and are studied by high and low. To guard against all these evil influences, a still further help is sought

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by wearing charms or amulets, repeating Mantras from time to time, and securing suitable idols according to one's means, ranging from a stone idol to dressed dolls often of the most expensive kinds, to be kept in the houses or in the temples. These dolls are carefully attended to, being every morning bathed, dressed, fed, caressed, and then worshipped. Woe to any one who dares to lay sacrilegious hands upon these, for when a Hindu secures an idol and the ceremony has been performed over it by the priest, called Pran Pratishtla, it is believed that its nature is henceforth changed, it having got life and supernatural powers.

To remove this huge superstition, arisen from fear, it is necessary to reveal God to them in His beautiful character of divine Love, for "love casteth out fear." Therefore:—

1. The Hindus must be told that they labour under a misapprehension, that the Universe is not evil at the core, but on the contrary, that it is perfect in every detail,

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almighty Love with perfect Wisdom and Power in order to secure for Humanity every perfect Good, both here and hereafter.

2. The Hindus must be told that Brahm is not a distant, unconcerned mighty Being sunk in deep meditations, nor is He like a proud Oriental capricious despot, or a malicious, revengeful, hateful being, whose chief object is to harm or destroy them, but that, on the contrary, the true Brahm to worship is best revealed as a tender-hearted, just, and wise Creator, whose moral character is Love, exceeding all human love in its depth, constancy, and intensity. Therefore, every Hindu of whatever caste is dear to Him, dearer than words can express.

3. Assure them that in the true Brahm's sight they are not slaves, but His dearly Beloved, so that they can come direct to Him at all times without any fears or ceremonies whatever. He requires from them no temple sacrifices nor oblations, no priest to intercede for them. He wishes them to live in daily and closest direct communion with Him, as

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child with its parent, as a lover with his beloved.

4. Tell them that this life is a school of preparation, hence its trials and difficulties to prepare us for a higher life in a more glorious existence to which our souls are being evolved, and without trials of character this would be impossible.

The oppressive dread they have of transmigration of their souls through Mukti (*i.e.* 84 lakhs, or 8,400,000 births) is a misconception, and is not justified by modern and higher views of Brahm's character. Consistent with the exalted view of Brahm, our life from earth to eternity can only be a progressive event from one degree of perfection to another, a progress not perhaps straight as the arrow flies, but a progress like the spiral form seen employed in Nature, which marks progress through difficulties and struggles against opposing forces, which method, although slower and more difficult, gives better and more lasting results, serves a higher purpose and produces finer issues. Such a conception of illimit-

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able progress from one degree to another still higher, justifies God's dealings with us on earth, as it justifies our trust in His wisdom, power, and love, all working together for the happiness and betterment of His creatures everywhere. Such lofty hopes make life worth living, it creates heaven upon earth, it elevates us to be sons and daughters of the Almighty, even in a love still more intense for Him whose name is Love, whose life is love, whose leading of us is actuated by love, who wishes every one to be like Him by reflecting His immortal Love in all its heavenly charms.

5. Now if you instil these lofty and uplifting truths in the hearts of the Hindus, the result will be, that in proportion as you succeed in convincing them of Brahm's love to them, with whom alone they have to do, dispensing with all intermediaries of priests, incarnations, or imaginary heavenly powers, to that extent the fear of God and all below Him will lose their hold upon them. And if they find that evil spirits are not at the helm of affairs, then gradually the worship

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of these will also fall away along with their other superstitions.

From a Hindu point of view, however, it would not be sufficient to preach to them about Brahm being their gracious Creator and Benefactor, and His character being omnipotent love in full-orbed beauty. It is not sufficient to tell them that suffering in this world is one of the means to develop all that is best and noblest within them. They would probably still cling to their medicine men, their exorcists and priests, to ward off the evil spirits, attacks of sickness or distress. It is here that the modern sciences of the British Aryans will stand them in good stead. As these have chased away the intellectual darkness and superstitions which not many centuries ago covered Europe everywhere, so in course of time the same results will follow in India, as the modern scientific educations of the Hindus gain ground. Already the British Aryans are able to prove practically to the Hindus that the power of controlling the so-called evil and malignant spirits before which

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the natives quail will henceforth rest with the British Aryans and not with the exorcists. No appeal to the demons, no prayers or incantations to them are needed by the British Aryans; they have simply come to destroy the so-called evil spirits, to rout them out of the human systems where they have taken up their abode to harm and to kill. No secret about the process, only appropriate physical antidotes are employed, such as by inoculation, by vaccination, by serum treatment, by cultivating antitoxins to destroy the bacillus, also by the help of Finsen's lights, by Röntgen rays, by radium, or by the many other scientific methods which are being invented to add to the armoury of the medical and scientifically trained knights for the conquest, final overthrow, and stamping out of these invisible enemies of the human race. The life history of micro-organism is therefore closely studied, as also the handmaidens of medicine, such as physiology, pharmacology, and pathology, with antiseptic or Lister's treatment. The scepticism of the Hindus

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can be overcome by demonstrating to them that most infectious illnesses in the system have been discovered to be caused by microscopical life forces invading the human system. The Hindus all along have been right in believing that a hierarchy of unseen life forces, both friendly and hostile, surrounded and affected their every step in life. Instead, however, of this making them cringing slaves of evil spirits, these have to be fought against by scientific weapons and inventions, by which only victory is ultimately certain. They must be enlightened as to what formidable foes have already been conquered by the British Aryans in this way, and that with other bacterias the fight is still going on. Show further to the Hindus that the British Aryans are busy fighting the so-called evil spirits which cause cholera, plagues, fevers, lockjaw, leprosy, tuberculosis, diphtheria, measles, scarlet fever, typhoid, hydrophobia, pulmonary consumption, and other deadly diseases, all traced to the presence in the blood of millions upon millions in a square

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inch of different living colonies of bacillus; that in the long run, medical science is sure to triumph over all these to the benefit of humanity and the lengthening of life. Such a revelation, when grasped by the masses of Hindus, will give the death-blow to most of their present superstitious notions.

Another weapon with which the modern world is fighting the invisible foes of humanity, of which the Hindus stand in dread, is by sanitary science. This also, in conjunction with the others, is a splendid way of strategy to fight all diseases, or at least check their ravages and progress. The weapon is simplicity in itself: it consists in extreme cleanliness, Lister's treatment in surgery, a pure water-supply, fresh air, wholesome food, proper covering, and suitable rest, to which add proper drainage, the removing of stagnant pools, the destruction of the larvæ of flies, mosquitoes, and other insects or rodents which carry infections, and the adoption of the speedy isolation of patients to hospitals, good dispensaries near at hand with skilled doctors and nurses. All

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these are valuable aids, and enable the medical profession to carry on the campaign against the so-called evil spirits with success. Of all evil spirits, the Hindus fear most Mari-amnan, the mother of death, and science now shows that her abode is where "filth" is. Hence destroy filth wherever it meets us, but do not worship it.

In the same way astrology and kindred branches, which forecast the future, have long ago been driven away from Europe, as the light of science began to dawn at the birth of astronomy. The dignity and the divinity of man should be pointed out to the Hindus, showing them how the evolution of man above all other life forces on this globe has been so extraordinary in this short earth life, that the soul of each and every human being evidently holds vast possibilities as to what it may yet advance to, with the attainment of an individual life which has an eternal quality and is ever progressing.

The supreme happiness of life will be the conviction that we are loved by God the

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Beautiful as He is revealed to the intellect and the heart. By contemplation humanity will be led to admire, to love and to adore God. We shall come to realise that we are loved by Him for ourselves, not for what we have or hope to be, but loved in spite of all our shortcomings and imperfections, because He is infinite love in Himself, the sceptre He holds is the sceptre of omnipotent love. The love of God, the Beautiful and Perfect One, and the dear communion and fellowship in spirit with Him here and in actual vision with Him hereafter, *this* is immortality. The mere fact that between the soul and God there has come a close, an intimate relation, is the great guarantee of a future everlasting blissful life; it is a companionship already now; a union which death is as powerless to affect as it is powerless to suspend.

The root of all the superstitious practices and beliefs we have been dealing with lies chiefly in the Hindus being Polytheistic worshippers. By erecting, instead of Polytheism, the worship of *one* God, whose char-

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acter is founded upon love, beauty, justice, truth, wisdom and joy, all blended in one transcending glory, they will come to realise that they with the rest of humanity live in the Kingdom of one God and under the dominion of His eternal goodness. The Religion of Beauty in the transformed Hinduism will give them sure grounds for their minds to rest. It will purify the heart, exalt the sense of companionship, deepen their sense of beauty, strengthen their resolve for a better and higher life, chasten them into resignation and unfaltering trust, and kindle the spirit of brotherhood and self-sacrifice, because a divine love will rule in their hearts, love to God in His divine Beauty and loveliness. Such a love opens up to the soul unlimited avenues of progress and joy. The roots and fibre of all true religion are always to be found in admiration, love, sympathy, community of will and desires. Transformed Hinduism, when it has evolved all that is true, elevating, and captivating found in its

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own system, will erect a Monotheism, a religion of Beauty. The mass of fables sprung from an undisciplined imagination and fancy, of which their ancient books are so full, will be thrown away to the limbo of poetic nursery tales. In fresh attraction will then be seen the truth which the early Aryans always held, namely, the soul's near, dear, and close relationship to God, which in its new transformation will constitute one of its diadems of spiritual wealth and glory. The beautiful conception of religion being interfused and made a living part or phase of our hourly and daily life, including our thoughts, work, plans, and aspirations, has been fully more cultivated in India than almost anywhere else; and the Religion of Beauty teaches also the duty and privilege of making our whole life an offering of love upon love's altar, because the heart overflows with admiration and love to the source of its being, who is love's ideal and also love's realisation. We must read the world in the light of the infinite love of

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God. The Monotheistic Religion of Beauty is based on Divine Love, on the social nature of that Love and in our participation of it. Upon this threefold foundation it is safe to build for time and for eternity.

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The Brahmanas, Aranyaki, and Upanishads

THE study of the four Vedas leads naturally to the treatises called the Brahmanas.

Each of the four Vedas is made up of three parts, the original Samhita or collection of hymns, and the Brahmanas (*i.e.* what concerns the priests), and the Dharma Sutras, or codes of social or nomistic laws.

The Brahmanas, therefore, are separate additions to the Vedas made by later generations of learned priests. These treatises contain explanations and details of Vedic ceremonies, and in this aspect may be called ritualistic text-books for the guidance of the priests under two divisions:—1. Vidhi, *i.e.* rules; 2. Artha-Vada, *i.e.* explanatory remarks. At the same time, a large space is

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devoted in supplementary portions to mystical and philosophical speculations. In this way the Brahmanas fall into three divisions:—

1. Ritualistic text-books.
2. Mystical (Aranyaka).
3. Philosophical (Upanishads).

The value of these treatises may be inferred when it is considered that the Brahmanas include the oldest explanations of the rituals and the sacrifices, the oldest linguistic, phonetic, and grammatical explanations, the oldest traditional narratives, the oldest philosophical speculations, the oldest mystical teaching, and the oldest genuine prose work in Sanskrit. They are to be considered as having been given in the first place by the Aryan professors of theology to their advanced classes of Divinity students, perhaps orally to start with until afterwards the lectures were collected, either by the teachers or by admiring scholars, in which form they have reached us. It is interesting to compare the intellectual activity of the fair-skinned Aryans, their thirst for knowledge, and their ambition to use it to

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their own advantage, with the attitude of the natives, who folded their hands and set no value on mental treasures, which, however, yielded power, influence, and wealth to those keen-witted Aryans, who realised that brain is better than muscle. At every centre of Brahmanism there were schools for imparting instruction in the sacred texts and in general or special knowledge. From these intellectual nurseries trained Brahmans went forth wherever Aryan influence reached, and even beyond it, to act as priests, advisers, and councillors of kings and chieftains, or to become leaders of men in other branches of human knowledge, in all of which they excelled, so that even to the farthest South of India their fame spread as the wise men from the far North, to whom Heaven had revealed all truths, and who had even powers with the Gods to compel them to do their behests.

At the time when the Brahmanas were delivered, the three Vedas had come to be looked upon by the Aryan priesthood as Divine productions, the very words spoken by

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Brahm, in whose possession they had been from eternity. To doubt this was blasphemy. These writings had to be received as absolute truth. While the Aryan professors, no doubt devoutly and unhesitatingly, gave their assent to this dogma, yet, as time went on, much mystery hung about these books, owing to their great age, and the young students would be anxious to know the why and wherefore of many things connected with the sacred volumes, as well as with the whole sacrificial and ritualistic system. In the East the custom is generally for the scholars to propound questions to the teacher for him to answer. The Brahmanas are practically summary of answers to eager questions by the most celebrated theological professors of the age.

They contain details of the Vedic ceremonies, and enter into long and at times, to modern readers, wearisome explanations of their origin and meaning. The professors, with immense industry, had explained the use of particular verses and metres and the hymns of the Mantras. They had gone into details of

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sacrifices, into the entire ritual, into the intricate and protracted parts of the ceremonial rites, explaining their origin and uses with injunctions and glosses. As illustrations they interspersed legends, and otherwise tried to make their dry and difficult subjects more easy for the scholars to understand. Finally, they devoted large space to exegetical and dogmatical teaching, intended to supplement the knowledge of the Vedas, to explain ceremonies and to inculcate religious principles.

All this teaching must have been of interest and valuable help to clear up difficulties to the listeners, as it was to generations after them, although in India their study has been neglected now for many centuries, especially after the corruptions which set in during later ages, and even more so after intricate sacrificial ceremonies had fallen into disuse in India. To modern philologists these treatises must always be of interest, for they contain the only extant prose works of the Sanskrit as a popular language.„

Each collection or Sanhitas of the Vedas

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has one or more Brahmanas attached. The Rig Veda has two, of which the Aitareya is thought to be the oldest, dating as far back as the seventh century B.C. It treats also of the ceremonies connected with the ascension of kings. The other is the Kaushitaki. The Soma Veda has three leading ones and five minor ones, while the Atharva has only one Brahmana, called Go-patha. The Yajur has two, one of which is considered the most important of all the Brahmanas, called the Shatapatha, and, I believe, has been translated into English.

It has been suggested that the Aryan's literary activity may be classified as having been produced in different parts of India. Thus the three Vedas are located as having been chiefly composed in the north-west and east to Benares: the Brahmanas in the west and east, the Sutras (short sentences) in the north and south, while the Epics had their rise in the sacred region near Delhi. These classifications are, however, open to criticism.

The learned Aryan professors, whose names

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have sunk in oblivion, have nevertheless had the honour of their writings being called by a grateful posterity "Sruti,"—*i.e.* revealed word from Brahm, and as such they were attached to the sacred Vedas in the living study of which they had spent laborious years elucidating their contents. As these sacred writings were precious to their own souls, so they tried to make them precious also to the young students under their charge, by instilling the sterling principles found there into their plastic minds, so that the spirit of piety and courage which animated their revered ancestors and raised them high over other nations, would also be shown in their lives, to add still further to the glory of the race to which it was their privilege to belong.

THE ARANYAKA

The Aranyaka were studies by hermits who lived in solitude and have had comparatively little general influence, but the many thousands who have been of a mystical turn of mind in India have shown them

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great veneration, for in these treatises, which are found in certain chapters of the Brahmanas, the ancient recluses of devout imaginations gave expression to the "mystical" sense (Rahasya) in which they regarded the Vedic ceremonies and sacrifices. They also discussed on the nature of the Gods, the nature of the soul, the origin of the world, and the connection between matter and spirit, &c. Their inclusion with the Brahmanas testifies to their wide acceptance.

The four of them that are extant are called, in order, the Brihad, the Taittiriya, the Aitareya, and the Kanshitaki (dealing with Sama sacrifices).

As the Aranyaka recluses were Mystics, their explanation of the complicated sacrifices was that those on earth correspond to the eleven sacrifices by the Gods on High—namely, to Agni, to Sarasvati, to Vach (or Speech), to Soma, to Pushan, to Brishaspati, to Visve Devas, to Indra, to Maruts, to Savitri, and to Varuna.

The Gods on High were thought by the Mystics to have attained their supremacy by

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sacrifices, and that to attain perfection the soul of man must advance in the same manner.

THE UPANISHADS

The comparative neglect which the ritualistic Brahmanas suffer nowadays has not overtaken the philosophical writings called Upanishads. These were partly subsidiary to the Brahmanas, at the end of each of which, besides the Aranyaka, there are the Upanishads. The name has been explained variously as meaning secret knowledge, treatises containing the hidden spiritual doctrine of the Veda, confidential dialogues with scholars regarding the mystic knowledge.

The authors of these were also recluses who, generally at the last stage of their life, had retired from active labour, according to a current custom among the Hindus in force to this day. If they felt the heavenly call, they left their work, whether secular or sacred, their families, wealth, and comforts, to retire for the

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rest of their days to solitude, generally to the forests. There they prepared themselves quietly for the entrance to the next existence, which now loomed before them, and to this end spent their time in meditations, in studies, in prayers and fastings. Some of them resorted to mortification of their bodies and other austerities. As hermits they were relieved from offering sacrifices, ritualistic observances, and the rules of caste system. They were no longer looked upon as citizens of earth, but as candidates for heaven.

People flocked from far and near to these hermits, many of them evidently of profound learning and keen intellect, and all deeply religious, for advice, consolation, prayers, and cures of the body as well as the mind, bringing their tributes of bowls of paddy and water. They were also visited by earnest scholars as poor as themselves, but hungry for the spiritual food which the hermits offered them as a free gift from heaven.

These discussions were perhaps transcribed at the time, or, more likely, as is still seen

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in the east, where the Hindus' memories are often astonishingly tenacious, they were remembered, word for word, long afterwards, and with corroboration by others were committed to writing. The name given to the Upanishads means "sitting at the feet" of the master. Of the 1180 Upanishads which have come down to us as written dialogues between teachers and pupils, 108 are considered the most important. Of these eleven are called major and the rest minor. The former have commentaries by early disciples of the Vedanta. The most important is the Isad or Isavasya, found in the last chapter of the White Yajur Veda. It is in three parts, and the last discourse is considered unsurpassed in the Indian literature for elevation of thought and wealth of illustration. Let me give a few verses:—

There is only one Being who exists unmoved,
Yet moving swifter than the mind.
He is within this Universe and yet outside it.
Who ever beholds all living creatures as in Him,
And Him (the universal Spirit) as in all,

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Henceforth he will regard no creature with contempt.
The man who understands that every creature exists in
God alone and thus perceives the unity of being, has no
Grief and no illusion.
Isa also is All-wise, the ruler of the mind above all
Beings, the self-existent. He created all things, just
As they are from all eternity.

The Upanishads contain the highest authority among Hindu thinkers, and upon which rest the various systems of their subsequent philosophical schools.

The Upanishads are almost the only ones of the Vedic literature, except the Rig Veda, which are extensively studied nowadays.

Most of the questions which the Upanishads tried to solve transcend human thought, and their answers can only be problematical. But the profound insight of these early recluses is very suggestive to all thinkers, and all systems of philosophy in India in subsequent ages are based on them.

The following are some of the questions with which they deal:—

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How to reach the Absolute; to prove the infinite in the finite; to prove that the self in man is the highest self; to find unity in diversity; to know the nature of things; to solve the question of man's destiny hereafter; to explain the origin of the world; to solve the mystery of life; how to get rid of pain and sorrow; how to get release from transmigration, &c.

Besides these metaphysical problems they also studied cosmology and esoteric doctrines.

These hermits were the pioneers of what came to be called Inankanda or "path of knowledge," while the Karmakanda or "path of rites" came to be connected with those who were attached to the ceremonial worship to which only they looked for their soul's salvation.

To the authors of the Upanishads the duty of sacrificing correctly to the Divinities with a multitude of ritualistic ceremonials was trivial and mischievous compared to speculative "knowledge," which to them seemed

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all-important, as leading to the heavenly wisdom of which they were in search. The priests and ritualists laid stress upon sacrifices with elaborate ceremonies as the only road to the soul's salvation, and then only if performed by the regularly appointed priesthood, whereas the prophets or hermits laid stress upon "knowledge,"—*i.e.* feeding the mind with the wisdom which could make them know God more fully, and by this enlightenment lead them to obey Him better. The faith of the hermits was therefore opposed to all ritualistic and sacrificial encumbrances, which they considered were fit only for immature minds, still in the thraldom of superstitious faith in the priesthood and the efficacy of its services.

While the early treatises of the Upanishads were essentially idealistic and even pantheistic, some of the later ones, written in after ages, were empirical and atheistic. The Pantheistic theory of the early Upanishads, which identified the individual soul with Brahm, still holds the undisputed field in India among her

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deepest thinkers. This fundamental doctrine may be called "Spiritual Pantheism," as expressed by the celebrated dictum: "Tat twain asi," *i.e.* "That (Brahm) art Thou." In other words, they believed in the unity of all Being; that there is only one real Being which also constitutes the Universe. All seemingly existing things are identified with this great universal Spirit, and into which all separate souls of men will be ultimately united or merged.

Little did these devout and deep thinkers imagine, standing as they did on the brink of eternity, rich in spiritual gifts, but outwardly living a life of poverty and privation, and their names blotted out of the memory of society as if they had never lived, that they should become the teachers of the whole humanity in all subsequent ages, and stamp their thoughts upon succeeding generations for more than two thousand years.

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The Fivefold Ministry

In the five divisions of the ancient sacred literature we have a fivefold conception of God and man's relation to Him: In the Rig and Soma Veda, the Poet; in the other two Vedas, the Priest; in the Brahmanas, the Ritualist; in the Aranyaka, the Mystic; in the Upanishads, the Philosopher.

The Poet's conception is the first and the one nearest the truth, for the Poet realises the harmony of Nature, the beauty of existence, the joyousness of life, the value of the soul and its close relationship to the unseen and eternal One. As the joyous song wells up in the throat of the little lark that soars triumphantly towards the blue sky, giving vent to its rapture and love, and singing to make happy the dear ones in the nest, so the Poet's outlook realises that existence is

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planned in order to yield in the end a perfect, permanent, overflowing joy in human hearts prepared for it through life's limitations and trials. This conviction naturally makes the Poet optimistic, for he realises that what saddens the heart of man is only a temporary evil, and that behind the passing dark clouds the bright sun is shining, for the clouds are the children of the sun. The Poet's buoyant, bright spirit, sure of ultimate victory, arouses hope, aspiration, and energy to help in lifting life to higher levels. The strongest motive of all comes when it is realised that man is a co-worker with the Eternal for the world's good, that man has the immanent God within him, by which the soul is moulded on the pattern of God in everything noble, true, lovable, beautiful.

It is towards this attitude of the Poet that the modern mind is now travelling, after having passed for many weary centuries through all the other phases of thought, and learned by bitter experience their insufficiency to realise man's true relation of love and devotion to

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God, and man's relation to the world as being one of goodwill and fellowship. False and mischievous have been the usurpation which drove from the throne the Poet with his joyous, loving trust and active work, yet content to be ignorant of many secrets, if he had got hold of the *main* things of existence, namely, the love of God, the nearness of the soul to God, and the everlasting union of the soul with God. The world is blessed in proportion as the Poet's mission is acknowledged as the true aim. As has been said: "Man has noble instincts and impulses that impel him to seek the true, to admire the lovely and the good, to feel after and find the Infinite Perfection in which the true, the right, and beautiful blend into a divine and personal unity. Man's higher nature has a counterpart in a Divine Nature."

The Priest. He represents in one aspect the social side of man's nature, and as such he has an important function to fill. But alas, he has seldom been content with his lot, and has thereby become for centuries in India,

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perhaps unwittingly, humanity's bitterest foe and tyrant. In his proper place he represented the best side of social man, for in their social gatherings or in their worship, the feelings and aspirations of each individual present could be best united and summed up into one acclaim of praise and thanksgiving to the Highest by one of the company or congregation who was considered the most revered on account of his age, position, and gifts. From this point of view the function of the priest was an honourable one. Unfortunately for the welfare of humanity, sordid motives, selfish ambitions, and erroneous ideas of God began of old to make their influences felt. The family priests, who rose to be also the priests of the clans, managed to get their honorary office made hereditary, with good emoluments, and from this, step by step, their office developed into the ecclesiastical despotic empire which has ruled the Hindus with a rod of iron, and dethroned the Poet who had represented man's individual attitude towards God. The priesthood usurped the individual's

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approach to God, and appeared as sole representatives of the nation in its attitude towards God, ultimately claiming to be the sole medium between God and man.

The Poet's lofty and true conception of God was thus gradually overlooked, and in its stead were substituted by the rising priesthood (imbibed from the Dravidians) lower aspects of God, arising partly from fear of God, or suspicion of Him, or from the conception of Him as one based on the pattern of their own tyrannical and cruel Oriental despots. Thus God was caricatured, as proud and unapproachable by the common herd of men, except through the chosen medium of the priests. God was also represented as revengeful, easily offended, jealous, a stickler on etiquette, hard, cruel, even bloodthirsty. Such a monster required to be propitiated by sacrifices of various descriptions, such as burnt offerings, holocaust, peace offerings, thanksgiving offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings, through the medium of priests.

We can trace several leading ideas in connection with sacrifices :—

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1. The earliest idea of sacrifice was that of a simple thank-offering.

2. To gratify the gods by nourishing them with the essence or aroma of the offered food.

3. Propitiation to the gods in order to get from them in return forgiveness of sins.

4. Sacrifices by which to attain superhuman powers, and even by the prescribed sacrifices compel the gods to grant the favours asked for.

As an Eastern despot only received the chief ministers at his audiences, through whom the people's petitions were presented, so it was conceived that the Hindu priesthood occupied a similar position towards the Highest, and therefore only through them could their gods be approached, blessings obtained, and prayers answered.

The huge fabric of a tyrannical ecclesiastical system has now lasted for very many centuries in India, and has incorporated itself and made itself felt in the whole social life, from birth to death and after. It has kept the people in

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ignorance, superstition, and slavish fear, while the priesthood have posed as heaven's chosen vessels, and God's representatives upon earth, and have lived often in luxury, and always using despotic power. The priesthood everywhere in the world has been found to be peculiarly liable to try and usurp control over men's consciences, often for selfish ends. This must be vigilantly guarded against if humanity is to become free, and to progress to higher levels of excellency and likeness to God's character. This was the true mission of the Poet, to lead men onwards and upwards, to which the Priest should only hold a subordinate position. Priestly tyranny has throughout the ages wrought unspeakable mischief, and ought therefore to be resisted and guarded against in its conception, or as soon as it shows signs of aiming at dominion under the cloak of a divine calling.

The arguments used to prove the divinity of the Brahmans were, that the whole world is under the power of the gods; that the gods are under the power of the Mantras (prayers);

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that the Mantras are under the power of the Brahmans; and that therefore the Brahmans are God.

The third conception deals with the *Ritualistic* portion of humanity, which are in close fellowship with the priesthood, and generally part and parcel of it. They have joined hands with the higher priesthood, to stop people's ears, so as to prevent them hearing the Poet's inspiring call of the soul's individual worth and personal communion with God, and to which end no priesthood nor ritualist is required, unless as subordinates, to support the Poet or the individual in his lofty mission. The tendency of ritualists has always been to exaggerate outward ceremonies in place of heart service. Hence is so often seen the divorce of religion and morality where the ritualists get the upper hand. With them, as with the priesthood, the idea is that religion is mainly an affair of rites, expiations, dogmas, celebrations, and pilgrimages. They imagine God as a vain-glorious, self-centred, ecclesiastical personage,

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fond of flattery, ceremonies, and pomp. Their whole aim has therefore been to humour a Being imagined such as they are themselves, to worship Him by gorgeous processions, incense, and offerings. For this reason the services have to be highly ornamental with rich and flowing dresses, tasteful drapery, fine millinery, flowers, and bending of knees. He was also regarded as being delighted, like a professor of theology, to listen to hair-splitting arguments, by which His glory could be promoted; sharply condemning and punishing men for a mistake in their creed or a slip in the ceremonial worship, even in the wrong pronunciation of a word in the recital of a hymn; yet winking at the slack performance of moral requirements if the offender were otherwise orthodox in his creed. They overlooked, in their zeal for the outward, the fact that the essence of religion is what the Poet proclaims, and which lies in a loyal self-surrender of the soul to God. It is only as humanity retraces its steps from following the Priest and the Ritualist, and returns to the

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Poet's allegiance to heart service, that a new spiritual world shall dawn upon humanity, and appear in beauty and grandeur to glorify God and bless the earth.

The *Mystic* in one sense is nearer in his ideals to the Poet than he is to either the Priest or the Ritualist. Both are individualists, but while the Poet feels with the Mystic the immanent Divine inspiring him, it is always on the lines of sober reality; he tests his intuitions by the thinking faculty, and keeps a strong control over the wanderings of a warm and undisciplined imagination. On the other hand, the Mystic conceives of having access to the secrets of nature by some higher mode than experience. The Mystics were generally self-absorbed recluses, who, by fastings and self-tortures, were thrown into trances, ecstasies, dreams or religious illuminations, induced by the morbid state of their minds and bodies. Hence many wild theories have at various times passed under the name of mysticism from well-meaning Ascetics and others, who,

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by looking to inward states, moods, and fancies, evolved so-called revelations or inner visions, or other modes of so-called divine manifestations. The word mystic means "closing the eyes." They closed their eyes to the calm light of reason and trusted to a wandering imagination, relied only on feelings; and by these aimed at a certainty which is not given mortals to possess.

Mysticism in its various forms constitutes the illogical part of every religion and every philosophy. The Mystics did not lay to heart that there are matters with which the human mind has no faculties to deal. The radical defect of the Hindu mind in all ages has been its tendency to speculate and try to solve what is unsolvable, at least for man in his present state.

The Mystics claimed prophetic functions, and pretended to miraculous insight or preternatural intercourse with celestial beings. In certain states of the brain it is more easily imposed upon by such hallucinations than in its healthy working condition. Their

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principles included the identification of subject and object, the worshipper and the worshipped, thus leading to Pantheism, ultimate absorption in the Infinite, inward witnesses and impulses, annunciations from heaven, whence arose theurgy, the kind of magic which affects to work by supernatural agency or endowment, and in which the priesthood found an enormous lever for controlling the multitude and keeping them in their power, and reaping princely incomes.

In India magic was generally divided into four parts :—

1. Theurgy proper, which operates by Divine and celestial means, such as invoking the names of God, angels, saints, and by learning the secret names of the gods, expressed only by a mysterious sign.

2. Magic proper, performed by the powers of Nature.

3. Necromancy, which proceeds by invoking demons.

4. Witchery, bewitchment by a look, evocation of the souls of the dead, infliction of pain

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on a person by corresponding applications to its image in wax, the excitement of love by potions and enchantments, the use of amulets and charms, and fortune-telling. Hence there were books filled with magical formulas and invocations, so as to avert evils or procure good by magical rites.

All the population of India, high and low, were believers in prophecies, divination, and miracles by aid of theurgy.

It will be one of the missions of the British Aryans to overthrow the superstition in its myriad forms, under which the Hindus lived and have lived so long. If this is done the chief employment and emoluments of the priesthood will have disappeared.

Many of the *Philosophers* among the Hindus were not much better than the Mystics, and trusted to their fancies, more than to reason, to solve life's mysteries. The ancient Greeks were the first to call their seers, or wise men, philosophers, *i.e.* "lovers of wisdom." The objects of study the Greeks had in view were the most important which can occupy human

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thought, namely, God, the soul, nature, and the relations existing between these. The solution of these and similar questions forms the groundwork of the various philosophical systems of the Greeks, but, being the product of independent thinking, and seen from different points of view, they naturally led to conflicting opinions. Nowadays, philosophy is generally divided with reference to the three highest conceptions of man within the sphere of reason—namely, the idea of the true, the good, and the beautiful. Hence there are systems of theoretical, practical, and æsthetical philosophies.

Those Hindu philosophers, who were patronised by the priesthood (except the authors of the Darsanas), occupied themselves at first in more inviting directions, for their curiosity was insatiable, and they thought that by ecstatic visions they would be able to pierce the secrets of the hidden world and solve all mysteries. Their favourite studies, which, like the Mystics, gave plenty scope for their fancies to work upon, were threefold, and pre-

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sented as symbolical, allegorical, and magical expositions of the truth :—

1. *Theogonies* contained the revelations of the generations and descendants upon earth of their gods.

2. *Cosmogonies* contained revelations of the origin of the world in a threefold way :—

a. The world was represented as eternal, both in form and in substance, for they started from the principle that nothing could be made out of nothing.

b. The matter of the world was eternal, but not its form.

c. The world had a beginning and shall have an end, thus requiring a Divine power, a Creator who created it, either out of nothing, or out of pre-existing chaos.

3. *Gnomes*, or the doctrine of the spirit world with its 333 millions of ministering spirits, half of them persecuting humanity, half of them favourable to humanity.

All these dogmatic utterances, received as Divine verities, together with the priests' and mystics' teaching, have helped to keep the

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Hindus in superstition to this day, and prevented reason having a say and the poet having a hearing. Now happily British Aryans have come to India with their scientific methods, and given the results of their exact thinking. These they are now imparting to the natives for their enlightenment, benefit, and the overthrow of idolatry and erroneous doctrines, which are found in every part of the Hindus' education and in their speculations. All questions which are found insoluble by the reason of man should be left alone, or answers may be put forward as provisional hypothesis only, to which meantime provisional assent may be given until better ones are forthcoming.

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The Legal Works

DHARMA SUTRAS

THE third and last phase of the Brahmanas is called the Dharma Sutras, *i.e.* codes of the Nomistic laws regulating the Aryan's national, social, family and individual obligations.

They contain the earliest extant written laws or customs of the Aryans. They are considered of the highest authority, as all subsequent enactments were based upon them and as they affect society in all its departments. They are the text-books of law, and four of them are regarded as especially important.

Dharma means "duty"; Sutras, "strings." They were so-called because they are short strings of sentences, mnemonical abridgments, or aphorisms. They were compressed

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so as not to overburden the memory, which in those ages was the vehicle of all teaching and learning. They were, therefore, summaries of extreme conciseness.

From a modern aspect they are of importance, as showing the social condition of ancient India and the development of her religious and legal institutions. They are also of value as containing the essence of profound teaching and the summing up of a vast mass of literature long lost.

The Sutras fall into threefold classes:—

1. Kalpas Sutras, which relate to ritual.

2. Grihya Sutras, which relate to domestic rites. In these we find the beginning of the Hindus' legal literature.

3. Samayacarika Sutras, which relate to conventional usages.

The Grihya Sutras, or household maxims, were descended from early Vedic times, and probably even earlier, from Dravidian sources, seeing that there was a settled government long before the Aryans appeared. But no doubt it was owing to the Brahmans that all

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these legal maxims were laid down [illegible] rules for the constitution of the Hindu social fabric, the due co-ordination of its different orders, and the regulation of domestic life from a person's birth to his death.

The Smrites books formed the basis of Hindu law. They are divided into two categories. The earlier legal works, Dharma Sutras, were in prose; the later, Dharma Castras, evolved codes of which there is a large number in "metre." The house ritual and law ritual together constitute Smriti, looked upon as traditional-ritual, in distinction from Cruti, *i.e.* revelation-ritual.

All these the Brahmans collected and expanded in the famous law book, Manava Dharma Castra or Manu, which in later ages was taught to be of divine origin. The Manu is not only a code, but a religious poem exalting the Brahmans and defending their privileges. As we saw before, there were often, even for many centuries, violent disputes for pre-eminence between the Brahmans and the secular Rulers. At last,

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however, the Brahmans emerged triumphantly from this struggle between their own caste and the warrior caste (Kshatriya). They became the undisputed spiritual rulers over India, and claimed precedent over all. The State now being absorbed into the Church, became a Theocracy, and the Brahmans were God's representatives through whom the Gods ruled India.

The other chapters in the Manu refer to various themes such as royalty, the constitution of society, the regulation of everyday life, civil and common law, how to expiate guilt, and rules laid down for the due co-ordination of the two lower castes, as well as the caste system in general. It is surmised that the Brahmans in later ages interpolated most of these caste rules.

The social system of India is nowadays seen to be but the articulation of social and religious pride, enforced by sanctions, preserved by customs, guarded by rites, consecrated by associations, which are all religious, and by which the Brahmans have successfully main-

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tained their prestige and power over the masses. In the Rig Veda (probably also an interpolation) Manu is described as the first sacrificer and the ancestor of the human race.

There are three principal codes:—

1. Manu, about 500 B.C. (text-book, Satya Yuga).

2. Yajnavalkya, about A.D. 200 (the text-book Treta contains 1010 Shloka).

3. Parasara (text-books, the Kali).

These are mirrors of India's domestic manners. They illustrate the blending of law, politics, and social life with religious ordinances. The code of Manu is held to be the most sacred. Yajnavalkya is founded on Manu, but gives additional rules. Parasara is a still more modern work and enacts special laws. The three codes together constitute a kind of bible of legal Brahmanism, much in the same way as the Brahmanas of the three Vedas were the exponents of ritualistic Brahmanism.

These and other standard works were sub-

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sequently followed by hosts of commentators, the most celebrated of which was one on the law-book Yajnavalkya, called Mitakshara (about A.D. 1100). Besides these there are numerous legal compendia called Dharma Nibandhas, the most important of which is Dharma Ratna, famous for having a treatise on the law of inheritance, and still a standard work in India.

Thus in legal literature and as lawgivers, the Brahmans occupied a high position and justified their claim as being the Hindus' aristocratic priests of intelligence. They set forth the law in three departments:—Domestic and civil rights and duties, administration of justice, and religious penance and purification.

Manava is said to be the original lawgiver of the Aryan race. In the Narada Smriti he is alleged to have composed the Dharma Shastra in 100,000 Shlokas arranged in 1080 chapters. It was afterwards reduced into a more compact form, and now exists in twelve books containing only 2685 Shlokas. These contain speculations on the origin of the

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world, the duties of every profession, laws for a husband and his wife, laws of inheritance, royal duties, rules for the four castes, &c. The eleventh chapter deals with the laws on penance; the twelfth with transmigration of souls. The doctrine of Caste, which Manu explained, was that the Gods created different kinds of men, just as He created different varieties of animals and plants. The four divisions of humanity of priests, soldiers, traders or agriculturists and servants, were divine ordinances—as they were born so they must remain from birth to death, distinct from each other as lions, oxen, wheat, and paddy. All this shows how the Brahmans fortified their position, by giving divine sanction to this arbitrary differentiation of society.

The studies of the Brahman students were divided into two classes—the higher and the lower; all, however, having reference to religion. Besides the four Vedas the students had to become acquainted with:—

1. Method of Study (Shiksha). Phonetics

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with pronunciation and accent, as the Vedas were arranged in various forms to guard them from alteration.

2. Method of Ritual (Kalpah), explaining the ritual of sacrifices on the three fires. This was called the Shrauta Sutras, while the supplement, the Shulva Sutras, dealt with laying out the sacrificial area, and they required the study of geometry. The students had also to learn the Grihya and the Dharma Sutras.

3. Grammar (Vyakarana). The famous Panini perfected the Sanskrit grammar about 300 B.C. Before his time other learned Brahmans must have worked diligently at the same problem, for Panini mentions not less than sixty-four predecessors. Panini's own work consists of about 4000 Sutras. Many celebrated men followed him and gave rules of interpretation, which were collected and arranged by Patanjali in his great commentary about a century later. Other scholars carried on the work during the following centuries, both in grammar and as lexicography. As a result of all this labour, the Sanskrit language

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became one of great copiousness and refinement, and, at the same time, the only repository of ancient Hindu laws, creeds, and customs.

4. Philology and Etymology (Niruktain). The leading scholar in this branch is known as Taska. This branch of study was very important in connection with the Temple service.

5. Metre (Chandah), dealing with prosody —a study of vital importance, as we saw when dealing with the Rig Veda. The best scholar in this branch is known as Pin-gala. The Brahmans are said to have invented the seven notes in music about four centuries B.C. There was a complex division into modes and numerous sub-tones. The Aryans were early acquainted with different kinds of musical instruments. The three main types of "percussion," "wind," and "stringed" instruments were in vogue as far back as the Rig Veda. Chanting and sacred dances were also used at religious festivals. Regular metres appear first to have been used in connection with singing, music, and dancing. The metres

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called Chandras meant in Sanskrit "steps," referring to steps in dancing, rhythmical flow, and musical movements.

The Aryan priests attached a religious meaning to the use of metres, for particular prayers had to be presented in different metres to the Gods to meet their approval. This idea arose from the astrological conception, that the seven worlds which they thought constituted the Cosmos were arranged by the aid of "metres." Hence the "Harmony of the Spheres."

The Brahmans adopted the various rhythms, so that their verses might describe the movements and periodic returns of the celestial bodies. In this way musical harmony at their religious festivals represented the harmony of Brahm, as well as the harmony of the world. Brahm, in his divine nature, was thought to be not only the author of harmony, but harmony itself. The ancient Egyptians had a similar conception. Brahm then being synonymous with harmony, harmony, when revealed in creation, was regarded as the fullest expression

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to humanity of His being. It was the keynote of existence, and the ancients regarded the Cosmos as composed of seven harmonic celestial spheres which constitute Divine Being.

In the religious worship of the Aryans, there was one sacred metre and seven common metres:—

(i) "Gayatri." The most sacred texts in the Vedas are composed in this. It contains three times eight syllables. It was only used by the high-priest in addressing Brahm and Agni, "the beloved God of Fire." In the Rig Veda there are 2451 verses in this metre.

(ii) "Trishtubh," which means "three" steps—one short and two long. This is one of the common metres and consists of four times eleven syllables. It was used to invoke lesser range of divinities, because it expressed strength and power. In the Rig Veda there are 4253 verses in this metre. It was also used on behalf of the warriors (Kshattrya).

(iii) "Ushnih." It consisted of twenty-eight syllables to be used by those who desired long life, because the priests explained that

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twenty-eight was the symbol of life. In the Rig Veda there are 341 verses in this metre.

(iv) "Jagati" (forty-eight syllables). Every one who wishes for wealth of cattle must use it. The Rig Veda contains 1348 verses in this metre.

(v) "Pankti." This was a metre of five times eight syllables, and was used for riches. There are only 312 verses in the Rig Veda in this metre. In the modern world, with its mad rush for riches and unrestrained competition, this metre would doubtless be most in request.

(vi) "Buhati." This metre consists of thirty-six syllables, to be used for those who aspire to fame and renown.

(vii) "Ammshtubh." A metre of twice thirty-two syllables, to be used by aspirants for the heavenly world. Of this metre there are 855 verses in the Rig Veda.

(viii) "Viraj." A metre of thirty syllables, to be used by those who wish for plenty of food.

These eight different metres, of course,

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required a special training of the divinity students and priests, and by this means the sacrifices with chanting were effectually taken out of the hands of the laity. Thus in the Aitareya Brahman it is fully explained to the initiated why the seventh metre should be used for a candidate to gain heaven:—

"He who desires heaven should use two metres (thirty-two each) because there are sixty-four syllables in the two Ammshtubh. Each of the three worlds (earth, sky, and air) contains twenty-one places, one rising above the other. Hence the petitioner ascends to each of the worlds severally by taking the sixty-four steps. He who has such a knowledge gains a footing in the celestial world."

This is a fair specimen of their instructions in heavenly things, probably drawn from astrological ideas by which the horoscope was cast.

6. The last branch of an Aryan priest's study was Astronomy, including Astrology (Iyotisha). This dealt not only with the movements of the heavenly bodies, but with their

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influence on human affairs. In India to this day the Sadhus or Ascetics wear a rosary; those who belong to the God Siva with eighty-four beads, those of the Vaishnava with 105 beads. The sacred number 84 is made up of the twelve signs of the Zodiac multiplied by the seven planets. The sacred number 105 is attained in the same way, but by counting the moon as three (for the rising, the full, and the waning moon), multiplied with seven.

This study allotted to the ancient students was the one which they would pursue with the greatest ardour, not only for its own sake, but for the wealth it brought those who were skilled in casting horoscopes and reading people's future in the stars.

Under the second branch, or the "Method of Ritual," it was mentioned that the divinity students had also to study geometry in connection with the measurements of the sacrificial area. This also was determined by the study of the figuration of the constellations, and had a secret meaning. Indeed, everything to them was constructed on earth for religious

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services according to the patterns seen in the heavens. Hence the three chief altars had each a different shape. The one on the east, or Ahavanya, where the first fire altar was placed, was built square. The west altar, called Garhapatya, was round. The south altar, called Dakshinagni, was spherical or triangular. The altar itself had a low wall running in a serpentine curve from fireplace to fireplace, and had to measure a fathom across on the west side. It was broad on the west side, contracted in the middle, and broad on the east side, in order to represent the outline of a human being stretched out as if to be sacrificed. Only this shape was pleasing to the Gods. The sacrificial stake had an "eight-sided" ornament with a top ring. This was dedicated to the leading Divinity by their devotees. The greatest care was shown by the Brahman priests in their zeal to have everything in the divine service arranged as to give satisfaction to their Deities, whatever trouble it might give them. Art, sciences, and abstract learning were

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pursued in the first place as handmaids to religion. The learned Aryans who realised the unity of all knowledge made no distinction between religion, philosophy, and science. All alike were based on the Vedas, the treasure-house of divine knowledge. The Vedas taught religion, the sciences were the Vedangas, *i.e.* the limbs or branches of the Veda, and the philosophies culminated in the Vedanta, the end of the Veda. They were summed up as one, for they were all designed to lead the Aryans to the one science, the one wisdom, which saw oneself as Real or Permanent, everything else being the scaffolding, the fleeting forms, which must pass away.

The intellectual activity of the Brahmans thus gave India a learned language for the higher branches of study; a common language for the masses; a fixed form of government; an organised social system; an elaborate religious system, embracing the minutest part of life and living; law codes; a philosophical system ("Darsana"); and ethical maxims of unsurpassed sublimity. They also made

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wonderful progress in many departments of scientific knowledge, based upon experiments and observations. Finally the Aryan genius, as shown in the Brahmans, produced a vast and wonderful literature apart from their sacred scriptures. They excelled in poetry, fiction, and in the drama, and educated the Dravidians (especially in the south, where they constituted a large majority) to cultivate polite literature, in which the emotions and imaginations with which they were richly endowed could find scope. In the south of India there is a rich mine of literature due originally to the impetus given by the Aryan professors and learned men employed by the non-Aryans.

The caste of Brahmans, with all those faults of ambition and spiritual despotism which often cling to the noblest minds, and due partly to their belief that the debased natives must be treated as children, the Brahmans can yet boast of having produced great speculative thinkers, administrators, statesmen, and philosophers, and above all religious leaders of the

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highest type of mind—men of genius not surpassed in any other nations, who in their teaching inculcated a sublime morality and a cultivated devotional spirit. In early ages of superstition they were men of a high religious and intellectual type, with minds of singular subtlety, and a longing for that communion with the Deities they worshipped, which they prized over all that this world can give.

END OF VOL. I.

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